Hard knock life: Violence against women

A guide for donors and funders

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New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) helps donors understand how to make the greatest difference to people’s lives. We provide independent research and tailored advice on the most effective and rewarding ways to support charities.

Our research guides donors on how best to support causes such as cancer, education and mental health. As well as highlighting the areas of greatest need, we identify charities that could use donations to best effect.

Using this research we advise clients (including individuals, foundations and businesses) on issues such as:

• Where is my support most needed, and what results could it achieve?
• Which organisation could make the best use of my money?
• What is the best way to support these organisations?

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Hard knock life

Violence against women
A guide for donors and funders
More than 40% of women in the UK have experienced some form of violence. They have endured behaviour ranging from threats and financial restrictions to forced marriage, physical abuse and rape. These women are often abused by people that they know. As a result, they may suffer repeated abuse over many years.

The impact of violence against women can be devastating. Many victims suffer physical harm, which is fatal in some cases. This may result from the violence itself, or through suicide because the abuse and subsequent mental illness has made their life too painful to bear. Other women may lose their home, be unable to hold down a job or a relationship, and become isolated from friends and family.

Tackling violence against women requires many activities, from preventing abuse in the first place, providing support services to victims, and ensuring perpetrators are held to account.

Helping victims
Victims of abuse may have multiple needs: help escaping abuse, a safe place to stay, counselling and psychological support to overcome trauma, legal advice and assistance through the courts. Many women do not find the support that they need. Some find that services are not available in their area. Others do not access support because they find the system confusing and difficult to navigate. If women do manage to access support, it is not always the specialist help they need.

Many of the solutions for tackling violence against women began with charities. Once tried and tested, these approaches are often adopted and rolled out by government.

Preventing violence
Society tolerates violence against women behind a thin veneer of disapproval. Privately, a significant minority of people justify abuse in some circumstances.

Nearly a third of men think that domestic violence is acceptable if their partner has been nagging them.

Helping victims
Victims of abuse may have multiple needs: help escaping abuse, a safe place to stay, counselling and psychological support to overcome trauma, legal advice and assistance through the courts. Many women do not find the support that they need. Some find that services are not available in their area. Others do not access support because they find the system confusing and difficult to navigate. If women do manage to access support, it is not always the specialist help they need.

Many of the solutions for tackling violence against women began with charities. Once tried and tested, these approaches are often adopted and rolled out by government.

Conclusions
Violence against women has such far-reaching consequences that tackling it may also help to reduce mental health problems, homelessness, substance abuse, prostitution and child abuse.

By supporting charities in this field, donors can make women and their children safe from abuse, help them to rebuild their lives and hold perpetrators to account.
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Introduction

Joanna’s story

One night Joanna was soaking in the bath when her husband, David, came back unexpectedly. He came into the bathroom and stood over her, smiling. He had been moody and controlling recently, so she was relieved to see him smiling and thought he was pleased to see her. Instead, he dragged Joanna out of the bath by her hair, banged her face on the sink, threw her down on the floor and raped her.

Afterwards, Joanna felt traumatised and betrayed and wondered if she should have seen it coming. In the early days of their relationship, when they met at university, David had seemed so strong, charming and sexy. After a few months, Joanna was in love with him. Only once, before they got engaged, had he slapped her. When she started crying, he softened and said that he was sorry, he loved her and was frightened of losing her. Not long after that, they got engaged, despite the fact that Joanna’s mother thought that her outgoing, opinionated daughter had become quiet and withdrawn. After Joanna and David got married, all her friends gradually disappeared.

The day after her husband raped her, Joanna went to the police, where she was interviewed by a female police officer. Eventually she decided not to press charges. However, she kept wondering whether she could have done anything differently to stop the attack, and she also felt betrayed. Plagued by these feelings, she went to her local rape crisis centre. There she got counselling, which helped her to deal with how she felt. She also started going to the centre’s support group, and found that listening to other women’s stories was helpful. Joanna realised that she was not the only one who sometimes felt that the abuse she had experienced might have been her fault, or that she should have been able to stop it from happening.

Manjit’s story

Manjit suffered abuse at the hands of her husband as soon as she arrived in the UK. She was not allowed to leave the house, was threatened and beaten by family members and raped by her husband.

Manjit became extremely depressed and suffered anxiety attacks while living with her husband and in-laws. Imprisonment in the home meant Manjit lacked knowledge of where to find help. Her inability to speak English was also a barrier. She contemplated cutting her wrists several times, but hoped things would change.

Five months after her arrival in the UK, Manjit was brutally beaten and thrown out of the house. A neighbour called the police and an ambulance. When the police visited the husband, he complained that Manjit was having an affair and that she had been stealing from them. The police failed to take any action against anyone who had abused Manjit.

Because of her immigration status, Manjit did not have access to state-provided housing or benefits and so she became homeless. She moved in with her aunt, but could not stay there for long because there was not enough room.

Manjit went to her GP who prescribed anti-depressants, and referred her to a specialist charity for black and minority ethnic victims of domestic violence. She was physically exhausted and close to breaking point when she arrived at the charity. By then, Manjit was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, which was diagnosed by the charity’s counsellor. At the charity Manjit gained a strong support network and a sense of independence. She felt that the charity helped to empower her and she regained a sense of self-worth. These feelings of well-being were later considerably enhanced when the charity helped Manjit to obtain indefinite leave to remain in the UK, and she finally received the right to state support.

What is the purpose of the report?

Every year in the UK millions of women like Manjit and Joanna experience violence.

This report updates the guidance given to donors in NPC’s first report on domestic violence, Charity begins at home. It also broadens out the discussion to provide information about tackling other forms of violence against women.

This report gives context for donors who wish to understand the range of violence that is committed against women in the UK, the impact that it has, what works to keep women safe and to help them to recover, and how the government is involved. It outlines the vital work of charities in tackling violence against women, shows the results that charities achieve, and helps donors to prioritise their funding based on these results.
What does it cover?

The scope of this report is extremely broad: domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, violence against black and minority ethnic women (including honour killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation), violence against women involved in prostitution, and human trafficking.

We have focused this report on women because women are more often subjected to repeated violence than men.1 Women are also more likely to be attacked by someone they know (approximately 77% of victims of domestic violence are women)1 and are more likely to experience a sexual attack (92% of police-recorded rapes are perpetrated against women).2

This report generally discusses women aged sixteen and above. It does not focus on child abuse, which is the subject of a previous NPC report, Not seen and not heard. Nor does this report cover stalking, because there are few charities working on this as a stand-alone issue. Many victims of stalking will also experience domestic or sexual violence, and can turn to charities that are working to tackle those problems.

Our research covers England, Wales and Scotland, but not Northern Ireland.

How is the report structured?

This report has been structured around the major forms of violence against women. Each section shows what victims need, how the government is responding and how private funding can improve victims’ lives.

Chapter 1: Why tackle violence against women?

This chapter defines the broad topic of violence against women, talks about the sector in general, and compares and contrasts what is being done to tackle the various forms of violence against women. It examines the roles of government and the charity sector, and briefly discusses the gaps.

Chapter 2: What should donors fund?

This chapter looks at the specific role that donors can play to tackle violence against women, and what types of questions should be asked when allocating private funding.

Donors who require only a broad overview of how to tackle violence against women may choose to stop reading after Chapter 2.

Chapters 3–7

These chapters discuss the various forms of violence against women, or specific groups of women affected by violence. They highlight:

- who is affected;
- what is being done to help victims;
- the impact that charities are having on victims’ lives; and
- what doners can fund to tackle the problem.

Each chapter is fairly self-contained, so they may be read in isolation, or as part of the entire report. If donors are pressed for time, they may choose to read the summary page at the beginning of each chapter.

Chapter 3: Domestic violence

Chapter 4: Rape and sexual assault

Chapter 5: Violence against black and minority ethnic women

Chapter 6: Violence against women in prostitution

Chapter 7: Human trafficking

Chapter 8: The last word

How did we do the research?

This project took approximately 18 months to complete. We conducted detailed desk research and consulted 40 experts (including the government, police, academics, authors and some charities). We identified 150 key charities, and visited more than 40 of them. We analysed nine charities in detail, to produce a first batch of charity recommendations for donors. These will be released at the same time as this report. Some of the experts we met during the early stages of our research then acted as consultative readers on the report before we produced the final document.

About NPC

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) is a charity that helps donors understand how to make the greatest difference to people’s lives. We provide independent research and tailored advice on the most effective and rewarding ways to support charities.

Our research guides donors—individuals, foundations and businesses—on how to support causes such as education, cancer treatment and mental health. As well as identifying the areas of greatest need, we highlight organisations that could use donations to best effect, and the results that these donations might achieve.

We keep a list of charity recommendations and regularly update it as the situation changes. The list is available on our website at www.philanthropycapital.org.
Tackling violence against women

‘Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace.’

(Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan)

What is violence against women?

In this report violence against women covers domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, honour crimes, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, violence against women in prostitution and human trafficking.

Our definition of violence extends from emotional or financial abuse and threats, through to bodily harm and murder.

NPC is not alone in describing a spectrum of behaviour in the definition of violence. For example, the Home Office definition of domestic violence includes ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse’. The United Nations definition of violence against women talks of psychological as well as physical and sexual violence, and includes threats of acts of violence.

Figure 1 shows the spectrum of abusive behaviour discussed in this report.

How big is the problem?

Violence against women has affected almost one in two women in the UK. This definition of violence against women includes threats, financial restrictions, physical force and sexual abuse. (For more information, see Appendix 1: Prevalence of violence against women.) Around half of the incidents of violence are serious or repeated.

Table 1 shows the prevalence of the various forms of violence against women according to the British Crime Survey. Some of the figures may be underestimates because women do not always disclose abuse. The figures also fail to show how many women are victims of repeated abuse. In the case of domestic violence, nearly one in four victims is victimised three or more times.

Table 2 gives an indication of other forms of violence not covered in the British Crime Survey.
Table 1: Prevalence of various forms of violence against women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Prevalence rate (%)</th>
<th>Absolute numbers of women affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>Emotional or financial abuse, threats or physical force by a former or current partner</td>
<td>Since age 16: 29</td>
<td>More than one in four women has experienced at least one incident of domestic violence by a current or former partner. This means 7.4 million women in the UK have suffered domestic abuse.7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Previous year: 6</td>
<td>Every year 1.5 million women experience at least one incident of domestic abuse. This is nearly 30,000 women a week.7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>Indecent exposure, sexual threats and unwanted touching, rape or assault by penetration, including attempts, by any person, including a partner</td>
<td>Since age 16: 24</td>
<td>6.1 million women have been sexually assaulted in their lifetime.7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Previous year: 3</td>
<td>800,000 women are sexually assaulted every year. Every week over 15,000 women are sexually assaulted.7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>Rape, excluding attempts</td>
<td>Since age 16: 4</td>
<td>1 million women in the UK have been raped. Another 300,000 have suffered attempted rape.7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Previous year: 0.4</td>
<td>Every year 100,000 women are raped. That is 2,000 women a week.7,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Other indicators of the scale of violence against women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>80,000 women are in prostitution in the UK. 63% of women in prostitution experience violence.</td>
<td>80,000 is the most commonly quoted figure for women in prostitution but it is probably out of date (1999). The majority of women in prostitution experience violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking for sexual</td>
<td>4,000 women were trafficked into the UK in 2003.</td>
<td>This may be the tip of the iceberg because the problem is hidden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exploitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
<td>66,000 women in the UK have had their genitals mutilated.</td>
<td>This is believed to be an underestimate because of the recent increase in immigration since the last census, which was the basis for this estimate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced marriage</td>
<td>3,000 per year is a commonly cited figure.</td>
<td>Experts estimated this by presuming the reporting rate is similar to other forms of violence against women (around 10%). The Forced Marriage Unit deals with 300 cases of forced marriages every year, if the reporting rate is 10%, that means there are 3,000 cases every year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour killings</td>
<td>There is no published statistic about how many honour killings there are in the UK each year.</td>
<td>In the UK killings are often disguised as an accident, or as suicide, and are not recorded as honour killings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data is from the British Crime Survey 2006/07, which uses self-completed questionnaires to determine the level of crime in England and Wales. This includes crimes that are not reported to the police, and is therefore a more accurate measure of prevalence rates than police data.
Do the issues overlap?

The various types of violence against women are overlapping and connected. For example, around half of the incidents of sexual violence are committed by a current or former partner, which is a form of domestic violence; women trafficked into sexual exploitation experience rape and physical abuse. There are also many similarities between these issues in terms of how they are viewed by the public, how they are dealt with by government and professionals, and how the victims* are made to feel:

- the state has historically not taken any of these forms of violence seriously enough to ensure all victims get the support they need, despite the negative impact they have on victims;
- each has low levels of reporting to police, and low conviction rates;
- victims struggle to overcome public attitudes that insinuate they may be in some way to blame; and
- society ignores the scale of violence against women and tolerates it under a thin veneer of disapproval.

Despite their overlap, NPC has considered each issue separately, and has structured this report around each form of violence against women. We have done so because legislation and government policies differ between the forms of violence and warrant separate discussion. In addition, many charities specialise in dealing with only one form of violence. It made sense to dedicate a chapter to each type of violence against women in order to provide a more detailed account of the issue as a whole.

Violence against women is also closely linked to a number of other important social issues, such as child abuse, homelessness, mental health problems, and drug or alcohol abuse. The diagram in Figure 2 shows the variety of issues that are linked with violence against women. By tackling violence against women donors will also help to tackle many other interlinking issues, and in doing so gain leverage from their investment.

What is the cost?

Cost to the individual

Victims of abuse have their lives turned upside down. They must deal with the impact of violence on their physical and mental health; with society’s attitudes, including disbelief and stigma; with, perhaps, the loss of their homes and income if they have had to move away to escape abuse; with the intimidating legal process if they act as witnesses to crimes against them; and, particularly where abuse is prolonged, with loss of independence and isolation.

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* We have chosen to use the term ‘victim’ to describe women who have been subjected to violence, although some in the sector prefer the term ‘survivor’.

† The language of this report reflects this, although not all violence is perpetrated by men against women.
The long-term damage inflicted on victims is varied. On a physical level, violence causes a range of damage from cuts and bruises to broken bones, permanent scars, miscarriage, disability and even death.

Violence also causes psychological scars. Depending on who committed the abuse and how often, victims may be left feeling that they are worth less than other people, that on some level they deserved the abuse, that they are not safe, and, if perpetrated by someone known to the victim, they may feel a deep sense of betrayal. If victims are not believed by friends or the authorities, this can compound the turmoil. Even once abuse stops, it can take years for victims to regain their confidence and self-esteem, and to live independent, happy and productive lives.

Many women do not manage to recover and their attempts to escape violence can lead them into other situations where they are abused. NPC heard stories of women who became homeless after fleeing domestic violence and turned to prostitution, where they suffered further violence and abuse. Such women become serial victims of violence. Some women only escape abuse through suicide.

It is possible to put a financial value on this ‘human and emotional’ cost through ‘willingness-to-pay’ experiments. These experiments place a value on avoiding an injury or fatality by estimating what individuals would be willing to pay for a small decrease in the risk of the event occurring. The human and emotional cost of violence against women far outweighs other costs, as can be seen from Figure 3.

Cost to society

Violence against women also costs society dearly. The cost of providing increased public services (including health, legal and social services) and the lost economic output of the affected women runs to billions of pounds.

Figure 3 shows NPC’s estimates for the cost per year of each type of violence against women described in this report. Estimates are based on cost data produced for the Department for Trade and Industry and the Home Office (a more detailed explanation of costs can be found in Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women). The costs are high. However, they are probably an underestimate as there is no data available for the long-term emotional and mental health problems for women who have been victims of violence. The cost of prostitution in particular is underestimated as there are no figures for the

Figure 3: Cost of violence against women in England and Wales

- Human and emotional cost
- Cost to public services
- Cost in lost economic output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent Act</th>
<th>Cost (bn)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
<td>£20.1bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>£25.7bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>£2.1bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>£1.1bn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victims of abuse have their lives turned upside down. Many have mental as well as physical scars. Some are forced to leave their homes, friends and families, and others are too traumatised to work.
Figure 4 shows how these costs overlap. When we account for these overlaps, the total cost of violence against women comes to £40.1bn per year. This is more than the government spends each year on defence.¹⁸

**What is needed?**

Tackling violence against women involves many activities, from preventing abuse in the first place, providing support services to victims, and ensuring perpetrators are held to account if they have committed a crime.

Figure 5 is not exhaustive, but shows the activities that are mentioned in this report. The diagram is written with the victim, not the perpetrator, in mind, and does not list all of the activities that government and charities deliver in the sector.

**How is government involved?**

**The role of government**

The government is obliged by law to protect victims of crime and prosecute offenders; to provide health services; and to provide housing to vulnerable people.¹ However, these statutory responsibilities are often not enough to ensure thorough and effective support to help women escape violence and rebuild their lives. These responsibilities are overseen by many different government departments, which have different priorities. Many of these responsibilities are also devolved to local authorities. As a result, there have sometimes been gaps in service provision for victims. (For more detail about the roles of central government and local authorities, see Chapters 3–7.)

**Government attitude**

Traditionally, society in the UK has not taken violence against women seriously enough, and that has been reflected in government’s responses. Fortunately, there has been a great improvement over the past 30 years, in particular during the last decade. Special courts for domestic violence offences and new facilities for rape victims are among many recent improvements. The government has also changed the law and written new policies and action plans.
Charities have been tackling violence against women for many years and have become an important source of expertise.

Box 1: History of the violence against women charity sector

The women’s movement and women’s charities have played a leading role in changing public attitudes and lobbying governments for changes to law and policy over the past 30 years. Wife beating used to be joked about in the 1970s, and in 1990 it was still not illegal for a man to rape his wife. A lot has been achieved despite limited funding.

This history is still evident throughout the sector.

- Many women’s charities were run as collectives rather than having hierarchical management structures, and some still are.
- Many charity chief executives were political activists when they founded their charities. They spent a great deal of time and energy lobbying government departments and local authorities, and other organisations to provide services for victims of abuse. Now the climate has changed and charities are working with governments and other organisations to provide better services for women. Some charities are still struggling with collaboration, particularly with government, following years of gritty campaigning on subjects that they are passionate about.

There are figures available for specific initiatives for 2007/2008, but we could not find data for human trafficking, prostitution or domestic violence and sexual violence victims.

The government also spends money on female victims of violence through mainstream services such as GPs, mental health services, hospitals and police services. These services do not always record which of their service users were victims of violence.

How are charities involved?

The driving role of charities

The voluntary sector has been tackling violence against women for many years (see Box 1) and has become an important source of expertise. Charities are pioneers, at the forefront of developing new approaches. They have also put pressure on the government, tirelessly lobbying it to provide more services and put in place better policies for victims.

Charities play vital roles in tackling violence against women:

- providing services to victims on behalf of (and paid for by) government;
- providing services to victims that are not funded by government;
- developing best practice through innovation and experimentation;
- disseminating good practice once developed;
- lobbying the government on matters such as poor service provision and controversial legislation;
- changing attitudes of the public to tackle myths around violence against women;
- training professionals in contact with victims such as the police, midwives, and magistrates;
- researching into causes, costs and ‘what works’ in tackling it; and
- coordinating and informing the sector.

The rest of this report discusses the role of charities in detail, but to understand charities’ achievements, donors may wish to understand the structure and funding of the charity sector first.

Structure and funding of the charity sector

The violence against women charity sector is fragmented and under-funded.* The sector is mainly comprised of many small charities and only a handful of ‘large’ charities. Two of the largest charities—Refuge, Women’s Aid Federation of England and Eaves Housing for Women—provide refuge accommodation on behalf of the government. Yet their combined 2007 income was £17m, compared

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* The sector is better funded in Scotland, where the government has a violence against women strategy, which is underpinned by ring-fenced funding.
to the income of a single children’s charity, Barnardo’s, of £157m.

The combined income of the largest 200 charities tackling violence against women was £97m in 2007. To calculate this, NPC used GuideStar UK to compile a list of all of the charities in the sector. GuideStar UK keeps records of all charities in England and Wales (there is no such resource for Scotland).

The list is not comprehensive because not all charities in the sector tag themselves with the most relevant search terms or key words. As a result, some charities known to NPC were not included in the list at first, and some that were included were not relevant. In addition, a number of charities operate domestically and internationally, both in and outside of the violence against women sector; for these charities it is difficult to ascertain how much of their income is directed into the sector in the UK. For large charities with this profile (for example, the Salvation Army), NPC tried to include only the proportion of their income relevant to this sector.

For these reasons, the figures can only be used for indicative purposes. Nonetheless, our analysis supported some of our own general observations about the sector (one of which is that there are many tiny, local support groups that are in a very vulnerable funding position).

As shown in Figure 6, the sector is dominated by domestic violence charities. This is partly because more women are affected by domestic violence than other types of abuse; because the government funds bed spaces in refuges, which contributes to the relatively “high” income of domestic violence charities; and it also reflects priorities amongst local authorities. The fact that domestic violence is better funded than other violence against women issues should not suggest that there is a limited role for private funding: women continue to be abused at home and many do not receive the support that they want to escape abuse and rebuild their lives.

Most charities are small; a combined £79m income for just the domestic violence charities is spread across 117 charities, so the average income is just under £700,000. The average income for sexual violence charities is smaller still, at less than £140,000.

Victims benefit from local services, but it is hard to see how such a fragmented charity sector, comprised of many small charities with few umbrella bodies, can operate with many economies of scale, or can efficiently share best practice. NPC has seen effective charities competing against each other for the limited funding available to the sector.

**What are the challenges for the sector?**

Laws, policies and services for victims differ depending on what type of violence is being addressed. A woman affected by domestic violence has different needs from a woman who has been trafficked, and their abusers may also need to be dealt with differently. Each of the later chapters of this report highlight the unique challenges for tackling each type of violence against women. However, a number of issues cropped up time and again, and are common across the whole sector. These are discussed below.

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Figure 6: Size of the violence against women charity sector by issue (total £97m)
Hard knock life | Tackling violence against women

Massive gaps in service provision

Recent research carried out by the End Violence Against Women campaign found that there are massive gaps in service provision for female victims of violence. The services that do exist are unevenly distributed in terms of geography and population, and they are also mostly domestic violence services. Figure 7 highlights how the services that victims get depend on where they live; the proverbial ‘postcode lottery’.

In practical terms, this means:

- one in three local authorities has no women’s refuge;
- there is no national rape telephone helpline in England and Wales;
- less than a quarter of local authority areas have any sexual violence service, so the majority of women in the UK cannot get access to a rape crisis centre;
- nine out of ten local authorities have no specialist services for black minority ethnic women and those that exist are located in urban areas;
- there are no services dealing with female genital mutilation in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales or in five of the eight English regions; and
- almost half of the regions in England do not have government run domestic violence perpetrator programmes that are part of a well-recognised and accredited network.

Services are more evenly distributed in Scotland and Wales. In Scotland, the combination of an overall violence against women strategy, clear allocated responsibilities and ring-fenced funding leads to better service provision per head of population.

Uncertain and inadequate funding

The main reason for such patchy service provision in England and Wales is a lack of sustainable funding. Nearly three million women experience violence each year in the UK, and millions more women have suffered violence in the past, so there are many millions of survivors who may need support, although not all seek it. Due to a lack of resources, some services are forced to prioritise women. For example, in the domestic violence sector, some services prioritise victims who are deemed to be ‘high risk’. This is pragmatic, but ignores the fact that women who have never been to the police, or who have complained to the police but were not classified as ‘high risk’, are still being abused at home. All women who are being abused should be able to access some form of support if they want to escape abuse.

Even when funding is available, it is often worryingly uncertain. For example, Home Office funding to charities through the Victims Fund is often provided for one year, and charities usually hear only at the start of the financial year that they are eligible for funding.

'We are concerned that in March, we still won’t know about the continuation of the Victims Fund. Why don’t we know whether the Victims Fund will exist next year? It’s really important for planning ahead, and the excuse is that ministers have yet to make up their minds — well they had better make up their minds quickly. […] It’s a matter of life and death, it really is. We’ve had situations in the past where we’ve had funding issues, and women have threatened to commit suicide if they can’t see us. And we have to manage that.’

Sheila Coates from South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre

When funding is uncertain, services disappear. This situation is most evident in the sexual violence sector—there are now only half the number of rape crisis centres that there were in 1984 and, without more funding, more closures are likely.

The funding situation in Scotland is far better because funding is ring-fenced. Between 2006 and 2008 the Scottish Executive invested £3m a year into violence against women organisations, and a further £700,000 a year specifically to rape crisis centres. The new Scottish Government continues to support the violence against women sector. From 2008 each of the 12 rape crisis centres will
receive £150,000 over three years. Given that the smallest rape crisis centre has an income of £60,000 and the largest an income of over £260,000 this is a considerable investment in the sexual violence sector. It has also announced a stream of funding for other violence against women organisations but it has not specified how big the pot is.

**Commissioning of services**

Many experts claim that the gap in services is only getting worse. Large service providers, such as housing associations, are more successful in bidding in competitive commissioning processes than specialist women’s refuge providers. Statutory services are reducing costs by developing generic services, something that has hit the sector particularly hard. One highly respected specialist black and minority ethnic (BME) women’s charity has recently lost a long-standing statutory grant, because the council wanted the charity to open up its services to more non-BME women.

**Hostile attitudes towards victims**

Society is a little more willing to discuss violence towards women than it was 30 years ago. These days the subject appears frequently in newspapers, and as storylines in television shows. Numerous polls of people’s attitudes toward violence against women show that people nominally reject it. However, digging deeper, there are often circumstances in which they think it is justifiable or excusable. Nearly a third of men think that domestic violence is acceptable if their partner has been nagging them.23 Around one in five people think a woman is at least partially responsible for being raped if she is alone in a dangerous or deserted area.28 One in five young men considers it acceptable to force a woman to have sex if they are married.29 (See Box 2 for more attitudes to violence.)

This has an impact on the reception that victims get, which is very important in determining how victims will deal with abuse. Generally victims tell a friend or family about the abuse first, and if their response in some way exculpates the perpetrator, the victim is unlikely to seek help.30

It is not just the general public that blames victims—this hostility finds its way into the criminal justice system, in the attitudes of some police, prosecutors and juries. In fact, Julie Bindel, an expert in the violence against women sector, said in 2006: ‘If I were raped today I would not report it… I would rather take my chances as a defendant in court, than as a complainant in a system that seems bent on proving that rape is a figment of malicious women’s imagination.’

**Box 2: Society’s attitudes to violence against women**

- Over a quarter of people think a woman bears some responsibility for being raped if she is wearing revealing clothing.24
- 18% think rape can be a woman’s fault if she is known to have had many sexual partners.24
- 30% of people believe that domestic violence is acceptable in certain circumstances.23
- Nearly half of people believe that domestic violence is something that happens behind closed doors and is for the partners to sort out.23
- More people would call the police if someone was mistreating their dog than if someone was mistreating their partner (78% versus 53%).23
- People are much less likely to be convicted of murdering a prostitute than of another murder. The conviction rate of 75% for murder drops to 26% when it comes to killings of prostitutes.27

**Lack of preventative work**

As long as these hostile attitudes remain entrenched in our culture, violence against women will continue. Preventative work is needed to change people’s attitudes and, ultimately, their behaviour.

There are two main ways to do this: through public education campaigns that reach out to everyone, and through work in schools that attempts to challenge negative attitudes early on. Neither of these activities occurs systematically or over the long term. Campaigns tend to run for a few months, at the longest, and work in schools is not part of the core curriculum. There is no evidence that campaigns reduce the prevalence of abuse, although they do inform victims that help is available, and more victims seek help as a result.

**Compartmentalised approach to tackling violence against women**

As discussed above, there are many overlaps between the types of violence against women, and also many overlaps between violence against women and other social issues. Violence against women is also something that touches victims in many ways, and therefore requires many different approaches.

A number of central government departments are involved in tackling violence against women. At the moment some of them are falling short of their responsibilities and are failing to coordinate their actions with other departments. The problem is being tackled in a piecemeal way, instead of being tackled as a whole. For example, the Ministry of Justice has been improving the way domestic violence cases are tried in court and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is helping victims of forced marriage to escape, if they have been taken abroad, and helps them to return

Nearly a third of men think that domestic violence is acceptable if their partner has been nagging them.
The response to violence against women is criminal justice, rather than victim, focused.

The Scottish Government has, for several years, been committed to the violence against women sector as a whole. Unlike England, Scotland has a strategic framework for violence against women, and a dedicated violence against women team within the Equalities Unit. Multi-agency partnerships for violence against women exist in every local authority and are required to develop a local action plan on violence against women.

Charities also often fail to take a comprehensive approach to tackling violence against women. For instance, it is common practice amongst refuges not to allow women in prostitution to stay, which is one of the reasons why there are few places for these women to go where they cannot be followed by violent partners or pimps. In addition, considering the overlap between domestic and sexual violence, it is surprising that more domestic violence charities do not have
services for victims of sexual violence. NPC would like to see more collaboration across the different types of violence because of the overlap and connections between the types of violence. Hopefully, a more systematic approach would stop women from being trapped and becoming repeat victims of violence.

**Central policies but local power**

In England and Wales, there are some comprehensive central government guidelines for tackling violence against women. However, they do not always filter down to local action, which is one of the reasons why service provision is so patchy. Local government has the power to decide on its priorities and disburse funding accordingly. If violence against women is not seen as a priority by a local authority then funding and support will not follow. Too often, charities seeking funding to tackle violence against women have to rely on individual champions within local authorities to win contracts or receive grants. For instance, central government is planning the roll out of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and it wants to double the number of existing SARCs. But SARCs require police forces and Primary Care Trusts to run and fund them. Some areas have found it hard to set up SARCs because Primary Care Trusts are reluctant to commit resources.

**Tension between immigration control and human rights**

Immigration issues can take precedence over victims’ human rights. Some women who are legally entitled to be in this country are not entitled to ‘public funds’ that provide benefits, including the housing benefit that pays for refuges. If these women experience domestic violence, they may not have the resources to escape.

**Limited research and evaluation**

There is a lack of research on some aspects of violence against women, although this is not unique to this sector; NPC finds this in other charity sectors.

Much research has been done to examine the effectiveness of criminal justice interventions, but less on the impact of violence on health, employment, and other factors affecting a victim’s quality of life.

Examples of valuable research that could be done include a cost-benefit analysis on projects that help women exit prostitution, and research on rape and sexual assault in BME communities.

There is also a real need for more evaluations and research to find out which activities are most effective at preventing violence against women and which are best at supporting victims.

In general, charities in the violence against women sector do not systematically measure their results or use these measurements to prove the worth of their activities. Victims receiving support are closely monitored on an individual basis, but this information is not systematically measured, collated and analysed. It is particularly difficult to assess long-term results; women who leave charities’ services (such as refuges and prostitution services) often do not want to be contacted later. Sometimes, calling them to follow up may endanger them.
Exhibition highlighting the realities of human trafficking for sexual exploitation, held by the Helen Bamber Foundation, Trafalgar Square, London 2007.
What should donors fund?

Private funding to tackle violence against women can drive immense change, making women and their children safe from abuse, and holding perpetrators to account for their actions. Private funding can also help to tackle other problems that are closely linked to violence against women. For example, funding to tackle domestic and sexual violence may help to reduce mental health issues, homelessness, substance abuse, offending, prostitution and child abuse.

**Deciding what to fund**

There are many funding opportunities for donors who wish to tackle violence against women (see Figure 5 in the ‘Tackling violence against women’ chapter). NPC has chosen several key priorities to ensure that funding goes to areas with the greatest need and has the most impact.

Our funding priorities have been grouped according to:

(a) what issue to fund (what type of violence to tackle, or what group of women to help); and

(b) when to intervene (at the stage of preventing abuse, providing services for victims or prosecuting perpetrators).

This framework is reflected in the structure of this report.

**Which issue should donors fund?**

Deciding on an issue to support is largely a matter of personal choice, because there are so many types of abuse affecting different women. The following comments may help to shape donor thinking.

- **Domestic violence:** donors who wish to tackle an issue that affects more than a million women each year may choose to focus on domestic violence. There has been significant progress tackling this issue in the past few years, from government as well as from charities, and donors will find that this momentum may help to achieve results relatively quickly.

- **Rape and sexual assault:** hundreds of thousands of women experience sexual violence each year, so this is another option for donors who wish to tackle an issue that affects many women. This issue has been relatively ignored by government and there is massive need for funding for both new and existing services. Donors who like the idea of transforming the response to a problem may choose to fund sexual violence charities. There are lots of ways to make an impact, although it may be frustrating to wait for results in a sector that has relatively little momentum, particularly from government.

- **Violence against black and minority ethnic women:** donors may wish to help BME women affected by violence, because these women may need services that understand their culture and speak their language. Donors may also wish to help some BME women who are not allowed to rely on the safety net of state-funded services (such as refuge or welfare benefits) and so become particularly vulnerable; donors who like to campaign for change may find this a rewarding area to support.

- **Violence against women in prostitution and trafficked women:** donors who want to help a small, but growing, group of women who have suffered frequent and extreme violence should tackle prostitution and trafficking. These women have complex problems and may desperately need support, although donors should be prepared for the fact that helping them requires considerable funding and significant effort.

**Which intervention stage should donors fund?**

Donors may also wish to consider whether to prevent abuse in the first place, provide services to victims, or try to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted.

- **Why prevention?** Prevention is better than cure and government invests little in this area. However, it is difficult to prove the success of activities such as campaigns that try to change attitudes and behaviour.

- **Why provision of services?** Victim services deal with the aftermath of violence. Although they are reactive, they are essential, and must be able to continue to provide and expand to meet the demand from victims.

- **Why prosecution and justice?** Law enforcement and the prosecution process is largely the responsibility of the state. However, charities play a key role in holding perpetrators to account, and bringing about justice for women.
What else should donors consider?

NPC used the following criteria to select funding priorities for the violence against women sector:

- the potential results of the intervention (breadth, depth and change);
- the evidence for these results;
- the risk involved in the approach; and
- the funding need (government versus private).

NPC funding priorities

NPC's funding priorities are outlined in Figure 8. This diagram does not show all the areas that would benefit from funding; it highlights only those areas that NPC considers have the greatest need for private funding, and where donations may have the greatest potential impact.

Domestic violence: coordinating agencies, advocacy and psychological support

Coordinating agencies: NPC found evidence that, while many agencies are involved in tackling domestic violence, they need to respond in a more systematic way so victims get timely and effective support. Charities such as Standing Together Against Domestic Violence offer a way to improve the responses of agencies to victims. Coordination offers a way to leverage existing resources to ensure that they prioritise tackling domestic violence and do so efficiently.

Advocacy: Charities such as HALT and ADVANCE make escaping domestic violence easier for victims. By acting as the voice for victims, advocates offer a cost-effective approach to tackling domestic violence, by helping people to access the services that already exist.

Psychological support: Charities such as Refuge provide psychological services to victims of domestic violence, including both women and children. Mental health services are badly needed to help some people to cope with the aftermath of the abuse.

Rape and sexual assault: specialist counselling

Long-term, specialist counselling: Charities such as Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre and Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre provide counselling to victims to help them deal with the trauma of sexual violence. These specialist services are desperately needed and currently receive little funding.

Violence against BME women: helping women without the safety net of public funds, and culturally specific support

Campaigning for, and providing services to, women without the safety net of public funds: Women ‘with no recourse to public funds’ are not eligible for state-funded services such as refuges and welfare benefits. They have very few places to turn to and so have little hope of escaping violence. NPC recommends funding campaigning groups such as Southall Black Sisters to lobby the government on their behalf, to change the law to give them access to services. A campaign like this is a risky option as there is no guarantee it will succeed in getting the government to change the law. However,
if successful, it would give hundreds of desperate women a chance to escape violence. In the meantime, funding refuge beds, such as those provided by Refuge, will provide women with the means to escape violence and perhaps save their lives.

Culturally specific support: Charities such as Aanchal provide advice tailored to BME women. This support takes into account the added pressures that BME women are under from their community and from immigration policies. Support may be offered in a victim’s own language, which is important if she needs to discuss complex emotional issues or her legal immigration status.

Violence against women in prostitution: preventing adult prostitution and support to leave prostitution

Preventing adult prostitution: Charities such as Barnardo’s help vulnerable girls who are being sexually exploited, to prevent them getting involved in adult prostitution. Preventative activities like this offer donors a chance to intervene relatively early.

Support to leave prostitution: Charities such as One25 help women exit prostitution. They do this by providing women with a one-stop shop service, helping them to overcome issues, such as drug or alcohol problems and homelessness, which may be trapping them in prostitution. These activities are high risk, as women in prostitution have such chaotic lives and multiple needs that it is very hard to help them exit prostitution.

Human trafficking: specialist housing and support

Specialist housing and support: Charities such as the POPPY Project provide housing and in-depth care to trafficked women, including counselling and interpreting services. Helping trafficked women reintegrate into society takes a long time, and many women fail to make the transition successfully. Donors need to be aware that activities with this client group are risky; some women are re-trafficked if they return to their home country.

Building the capacity of the sector

The violence against women sector is small, fragmented and under-funded. Charities that are building the capacity of the sector and leveraging in extra funding need support.

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A high-risk sector

Sector risk

Investing in tackling violence against women is higher risk than an investment in other sectors, such as investing in helping children with their education.

Firstly, this is because many victims are highly vulnerable, and there are no ‘quick fixes’ for helping them. For example, victims of domestic violence are being abused by someone they know, so violence is more likely to be repeated...
It is all too common for charities in this sector to have uncertain and short-term funding streams.

and is hard to escape. Women involved in prostitution lead very chaotic lives and have multiple problems, such as drug addiction, so getting them to trust and use services and, eventually, to exit prostitution, is extremely difficult. When women who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation are sent back home, they are at risk of being re-trafficked because they face the same factors (such as a lack of income) that made them vulnerable to being trafficked in the first place.

Secondly, not enough is known about the effectiveness of different approaches in tackling violence against women. For example, do education programmes in schools change attitudes and behaviour? Do women who use refuges go on to live lives that are free of violence?

Organisational risk
Charities in the violence against women sector are more risky than other charities for a number of reasons. They are not particularly good at measuring their results (similar in some respects to the child abuse sector). Charities do record the results for individual women whilst they are using their services, but long-term results are often unknown. When results for individual women are known, they are rarely systematically collated. This patchy evidence base is driven partly by the lack of resources of many charities, which tend to prioritise service delivery over measurement. It is also driven by the fact that women who have been helped by charities often do not keep in touch afterwards, and contacting them can put them in a vulnerable position if they are still at risk of abuse.

Many of the charities are small and rely on the founder or on a few key individuals. If these individuals leave, this poses a risk for the organisation.

Finally, it is all too common for charities in this sector to have uncertain, and short-term funding streams. As we have already seen, charities in the sexual violence sector have experienced several years of under-funding and, as a result, many of these charities have limited reserves. This may represent a risk to the charity, although these organisations have often survived with low reserves for several years.

Balancing risk and return
Donors may want to ensure that their own portfolio of funding for tackling violence against women is balanced in terms of risk and return. Some interventions may be more risky than others, but the trade off is that they may have a greater potential reach, or a greater impact on individuals’ lives.

Charities to support
In this report, NPC talks about many different charities and the excellent work they are doing to tackle violence against women. Outside of this report we have recommended a smaller sample of charities that we believe to be particularly effective. These charities are listed on our website www.philanthropycapital.org. We have recommended one or two charities working on each of the five key areas discussed in this report. Our recommendations were selected according to the results of the organisation, its capacity to achieve these results and the risks threatening these results. The criteria used to analyse charities are outlined in Funding success: NPC’s approach to analysing charities, also available on NPC’s website.

NPC was not able to visit all of the charities that focus on tackling violence against women; there were simply too many. Donors who want to support a charity that NPC has not investigated (for example, a local charity), could examine the criteria in Funding success and ask the following questions:

- **Does it provide a specialist service for women?** Time and again NPC heard that women need and want services that have expert knowledge about violence against women. Inappropriate actions can compromise the safety of victims. For example, family mediation or marriage counselling can put women at risk of further violence.

- **Is it victim focused?** Before making an investment, donors should ensure charities are listening to the women who use their services and are responding to their needs accordingly.
• Does it collaborate with other agencies, and link in with other services? Victims often experience more than one type of abuse, and may have other problems such as drug or alcohol addiction or poor housing. Charities should refer women to other services as appropriate.

• Is it committed to measuring results? Even if a charity does not collate the results of its work, or have systems to allow it to do so, it should be able to articulate its desire to measure results.

How to fund

Once a donor has decided what charity to support, they must think about how they are going to fund the organisation.

Too often, charities have to rely on funding that is restricted to particular activities or projects within a charity. This is damaging because charities end up not being able to cover their overheads (non-project staff salaries, administration and infrastructure), which threatens the organisation’s survival. Charities need unrestricted funding (funds not tied to specific projects) to counter this problem. The charity is in the best position to decide the best use of particular funds, according to the overall needs of the organisation.

Given the scarcity of funding in the sector, charities would benefit from strategic and long-term funding. This would allow them to divert resources from searching for emergency funds to keep services running, to thinking more strategically and planning ahead for the future. It could also enable charities to deliver activities that, in order to be successful, have to occur over the long term (for example, awareness-raising campaigns to change attitudes about prostitution).

Across all forms of violence against women, donors should also consider funding charities to evaluate their own services. Most charities in the sector are so constrained by funding and staffing that they have had little capacity to develop sophisticated ways to prove their effectiveness. By funding evaluations, donors could help the charity to improve its service, and so could potentially leverage in additional funds from elsewhere.

Donors may also want to consider pooling funds with other donors to increase the impact of their donation.

Given the scarcity of funding in the sector, charities would benefit from strategic and long-term funding.
Every week domestic violence claims the lives of two women in the UK, and affects tens of thousands more. Many women suffer repeated abuse over many years, which takes a great emotional as well as physical toll. Victims may experience anxiety, depression and a low sense of self-worth. They often become isolated from their families and friends. Then there are the physical injuries that can range from bruises, broken bones, burns, internal injuries through to death. Even if they escape abuse, it takes a long time to recover, and some women never do.

Women are not the only victims of domestic violence. Their children are abused too, both directly and indirectly.

To escape abuse and rebuild their lives, victims of domestic violence may need to deal with multiple organisations, including the police, health services, courts, refuge providers and various children’s services. Victims have to piece together the help they need from these agencies at a time of crisis when their lives have been turned upside down.

A woman’s safety is at risk if agencies do not work together. For example, a woman may have been too frightened to report her partner, even after police have been repeatedly called to her address, on the same dates that she has been to hospital for treatment. If the police and hospital discussed her history, they could discover she is a victim of domestic violence and arrange to keep her safe from further abuse.

Funding priorities

Donors can help by funding advocates, who navigate the complex web of agencies on behalf of victims. Donors can also help to ensure that all victims get an adequate and timely response by funding charities that coordinate agencies to work together to deal with domestic violence. Psychological support is another funding priority. Many need and want it, but are not able to access it because of long NHS waiting lists and lack of provision by charities struggling to find funding.

Key facts

- One in four women experiences domestic violence.
- Last year more women experienced domestic violence than got divorced.
- Someone calls the National Domestic Violence Helpline every three minutes.
- Two women are killed each week by a current or former partner.
- Every year 500 recent victims of domestic violence commit suicide.
- More than half of refuge residents are children.

Victims’ voices

‘He just kept beating me. He used to lock the doors and take my keys and phone, so I couldn’t get away. People at work saw when he had beaten me up, but no-one ever asked me what was going on.’

‘Everything had to be perfect for him, but nothing was ever perfect. I had to keep my daughter very quiet. If she disrupted anything or caught his attention, that would be an offence—we would have to be punished.’
In 2002, Julia Pemberton decided to leave her husband, Alan, after 23 years of marriage. He had never physically abused her, but he had controlled everything and used to deprive her of money for food and petrol. His obsession with control erupted when she told him she wanted a divorce. He calmly issued an ultimatum: if she would not remain his wife, he would kill her, then kill himself. He meant it: he laid out both their wills in his study, along with instructions to their children, Laura and William, in the event of their deaths.

Julia went to the police and told the domestic violence coordinator about the situation. The coordinator was convinced it was serious; however, no charges were brought. Instead, Julia was told to get a civil injunction stopping her husband from approaching her or the house. The injunction was served, but the threats continued. Julia logged the calls she was receiving from Alan and took the written threats to the police, but nothing was done. It was later revealed that the police lost the evidence.

After Julia and her son, William, returned home from a weekend away to find the locks on the house had been glued, the police promised to interview Alan, but they never did. When the time came to renew the injunction, the judge suggested Alan could be allowed to live in the downstairs of the house with some form of partition wall to separate them. A few months later the injunction was downgraded to an ‘undertaking’ that Alan would stay away from Julia.

After 14 months of repeated threats Alan arrived at Julia’s home and killed his son, his wife and then himself. The transcript of the 999 call reveals further failures. Despite having a panic alarm installed in the house, and being assured that if she made even a silent call to the police a car would be sent, the operator repeatedly asked for her address. She was told to stay hidden and that officers were on their way, while the log revealed there were no units to attend. Firearms officers did not turn up until one hour after the call, and it was seven hours before they entered the house and found the bodies.34

Before her death Julia told a friend, ‘When my son’s bike was stolen, two police officers turned up at my door. When my husband threatened to kill me, no one was there to help’.25, 35, 36

What is domestic violence?

Definition

There is no single definition of domestic violence. Until recently the government definition of domestic violence was restricted to ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners’.2

In recent years the definition of domestic violence has been widened, and includes abuse between family members, as well as current or former partners. The government, and many charities, now use this definition.

The Scottish Government’s definition of domestic violence is gender specific. In other words, it defines domestic violence as a form of male violence against women. This is because the majority of the perpetrators are men, and the majority of the victims are women. Because this report is about male violence against women, we use this definition in our report.

Who is at risk?

Women. Because this report is about male violence against current or former partners, such as that experienced by Julia Pemberton (see Box 3). Chapter 3, on violence against BME women, covers domestic violence between other family members in more detail.

Legality

There is no specific statutory offence of domestic violence. However, it is against the law to carry out a range of actions and behaviours that are abusive. These include false imprisonment, harassment, threatening behaviour, criminal damage, blackmail, common assault, indecent assault, rape, actual/grievous bodily harm and administering poison.37

What is the scale of the problem?

The British Crime Survey 2006/2007 details the scale and the severity of domestic violence:

- one in four women has been a victim of domestic violence;7
- two women are killed each week by either a current or former partner;7 and
- approximately 16% of violent incidents are characterised as domestic violence related.7

These figures demonstrate that the problem of domestic violence is not only serious in terms of the gravity of the crime committed, but also how widespread the problem is. But they fail to show the full extent of abuse, because many victims suffer repeat attacks over many years. Approximately 42% of domestic violence victims have been victimised more than once. The British Crime Survey indicates that victims experience an average of 20 incidents of domestic violence in a year, which can often increase in severity each time.2, 38

‘He would constantly abuse me emotionally and mentally—telling me I was no good, that no-one liked me. He slammed doors, smashed windows and threw dishes. I got used to dead legs and bruised arms, the jealousy and possessiveness—they became a part of everyday life’,39

Victim of domestic abuse

Two women are killed each week by a current or former partner.
• women from households with lower incomes and/or living in rented accommodation;
• women with a disability or life-limiting illness; and
• women who are pregnant: 30% of domestic violence starts during pregnancy. Although this may be related to the fact that young women, who are more prone to domestic violence, are more likely to be pregnant than older women. Further risk factors for women in the BME community can be found in the chapter about violence against BME women.

Why do women stay with their abusers?
Many women endure abuse for a long time before they report the violence or leave the situation. Some never leave. They feel trapped for many reasons: fear that reporting or leaving will lead to an escalation of the violence; fear that leaving would compromise the safety of their children; fear that they will not be believed or supported by statutory services. They may have been cut off from other support networks (such as family and friends) who could help them to leave. A limited knowledge of where they might live or how they might support themselves is also a barrier. So, too, is the belief that the abuser will change.

How many children are victims?
Women are not the only victims of domestic violence. Their children are abused too, both directly and indirectly (see NPC’s report on child abuse, Not seen and not heard).

Men who are violent to their partners are likely to be violent to their children: in 30–60% of families where either domestic violence or child abuse was occurring the other form of violence was also happening.

Children can also suffer indirectly through witnessing domestic violence. This has been formally recognised and the definition of ‘harm’ in the Adoption and Children Act (2002) now covers instances where a child has ‘suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another’.

I would never have brought a child into the world if I had known what she had to be put through. She was terrified of him.

It is not known how many children are affected by domestic violence because the problem is so hidden. However, a study by the NSPCC estimated that one in twenty children is witness to frequent physical violence between parents.

Who are the perpetrators?
Like the victims of domestic violence, the perpetrators cut across all demographics (class, race and religion). However, studies show that certain factors help to identify the men most likely to commit this type of crime:

• A history of using weapons or violence, in either non-domestic or domestic environments, or credible threats of death;
• Animal abusers. There is a correlation between cruelty to animals and domestic violence; abusing a pet is often used as a leverage tool to control those in the domestic violence setting;
• Recent criminal convictions; 12% of victims report that their current or former partner had a criminal record before the abuse first started;
• Recent employment problems, low income and financial stress. Below average income does not cause domestic violence, however, half of victims in the past year reported that the abuser’s income was under £20,000 per year;
• Similarly, alcohol does not cause domestic violence, but the two often overlap: perpetrators may be up to seven times more likely to abuse alcohol than the rest of the population.

It is not possible to predetermine who will commit domestic violence. Studies show correlations between violence committed and particular experiences and behaviours. However, the relationships are not always causal. For instance, one American study found that 51% of men who had committed domestic violence had been victims of child abuse. However, there is no evidence that this abuse caused the men in question to commit domestic violence.

What is the impact?
Impact on women
The impact of domestic violence for women can be devastating.

• Most victims suffer physical harm, which is fatal in some cases. This may result from the violence itself or from the mental state of the victim manifesting itself in self-harm or suicide.
• Victims’ mental health may decline: many experience anxiety, depression and a low sense of self-worth. One third of women who have experienced partner abuse in the last year suffer from mental health problems.
• Some women are driven to suicide: 500 women who have experienced domestic violence in the past six months commit suicide.

One in twenty children witnesses frequent physical violence between their parents.

Every year 500 women who have experienced domestic violence in the past six months commit suicide.
Domestic violence takes time off work as a result of the abuse. This decreases their financial independence, and may put them at greater risk of further violence.

- Many women use alcohol or drugs as a response to and a way of dealing with abuse. Women experiencing domestic violence are up to fifteen times more likely to misuse alcohol and nine times more likely to misuse other drugs than women generally.
- Some women escaping domestic violence will become homeless as a result. This scenario in turn has its own set of secondary consequences, such as a higher likelihood of turning to prostitution to earn a living.

**Impact on children**

Domestic violence not only places children at risk of immediate physical harm but also threatens their development. NPC’s report on child abuse, Not seen and not heard, highlights the potential damage it can have on children.

- Direct physical harm. Blows to a pregnant woman are frequently aimed at her womb. Children may be harmed as they try to intervene in attacks, and they are often used by perpetrators to manipulate, control and abuse their partners.
- Emotional problems. Domestic violence affects victims’ self-esteem and emotions, to which their children are attuned. This can affect child-parent attachment and result in emotional damage for the child. Witnessing harm can cause serious trauma.
- Domestic violence can exacerbate children’s poverty and isolation. Not only can property and possessions be damaged in attacks, but relationships with friends and family frequently suffer.

The impact on children can contribute to the feelings of low self-esteem and guilt often experienced by abused mothers, because they can see how their situation is also hurting their children.

**What is the cost?**

The total cost of domestic violence is estimated at around £20bn a year, as shown in Table 3 (for more detail, see Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women).

Failing to address high risk cases is expensive for the public purse. The charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA), calculates that the direct costs of an average ‘high risk’ victim to statutory agencies amounts to over £10,000 per year. This is made up of half a dozen police call outs, a similar number of trips to the A&E department, eight GP visits and anti-depressants, 12 nights in a refuge, and a prosecution. It excludes costs...
to voluntary services (other than refuges), assumes no children are involved, and does not include indirect costs, such as lost employment days and emotional costs.48

How is government tackling it?
The following section is useful for donors who are interested in learning more about how and what the government is doing to tackle domestic violence. This context should help donors to understand the relative role and importance of charities that tackle domestic violence, which we go on to discuss in the next section.

The role of central government
Domestic violence is an issue of concern for a number of different government departments, each of whom must play a role if domestic violence is to be tackled successfully. Figure 9 is extremely complicated. Its purpose is to show just how many different agencies and departments are involved in tackling domestic violence.

Some victims have so many needs that the key thing they require is some help to navigate through this system, to get the support that they deserve.

Good progress over the past five years
Since NPC wrote its first report on domestic violence in 2003, the government has done much to make domestic violence victims safer. Domestic violence legislation is stronger, government policy has moved on, new and effective initiatives are being rolled out, the sector continues to become more professionalised, and more statutory services are committed to change and so are not afraid to try something new. Of note is the government’s roll out of what it calls the ‘coordinated community response’. By this it is referring to the systematic roll out of initiatives with a focus on coordinating agency responses to domestic violence, including Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs), specialist domestic violence courts (SDVCs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs). All three are very inter-connected and collectively their response to domestic violence is powerful.
Some of the government’s recent achievements include:

**Improving legislation:** The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced a number of new powers (and amended existing ones) to strengthen a victim’s case when brought to the attention of the police and the courts.

**Rolling out Specialist Domestic Violence Courts:** Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) are courts where all the professionals involved (the Crown Prosecution Service employees, police and magistrates) have received training about domestic violence. In addition victims are supported by advocates, so they are more likely to prosecute and less likely to withdraw their cases. The government has funded the roll out of 65 SDVCs in England and Wales.

**Providing funding to roll out advocacy:** Advocates are domestic violence specialists who help women to navigate a pathway through the myriad agencies involved with domestic violence, in close cooperation with statutory agencies. An advocate acts as the victim’s ‘voice’ and helps her with all her needs, while always putting her safety first. Among other things, advocates support her through the criminal justice system if she so wishes. Advocacy is a very effective way of keeping women safe, and the government recognises this. Advocates are essential to making a MARAC work successfully (see below). During 2006/2007 the government provided nearly £3m to seed-fund advocates in the 65 SDVC areas in England and Wales. It has also funded accredited advocate training, delivered by the charity CAADA, which operates in England and Wales, for over 100 advocates. Advocates who have received CAADA accredited training are called Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).

**Setting up Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs):** A MARAC helps all the services that should be involved with a victim—police, housing, child protection, health, probation and social services, as well as advocates—to become aware of all the facts about her life. Being armed with relevant information helps agencies to work more effectively to improve the safety of women victims and their children. The government is funding the roll-out and training of MARACs to all the SDVC areas in England and Wales. By April 2008 there should be MARACs in 100 areas, and the government has committed to double this number by 2011.

**Creating national standards for services and the workforce:** Local authorities are being encouraged to commission domestic violence services as part of their crime reduction efforts. The Home Office funded Women’s Aid Federation of England (WAFE) and the national charity, RESPECT, to draw up national service and occupational standards, to ensure appropriate levels of competence and professionalism in this sector.

**Developing national guidelines for domestic violence mental health services:** The Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP) is a project to develop evidence-based guidelines on mental health services for victims who have been affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The two-year project is a joint initiative from the Department of Health and National Institute for Mental Health in England. The project was due to run until April 2007 but, at the time of writing, it had not been completed.

**Central government still needs to do more**

Despite these efforts, two women are still killed each week because of domestic violence. There is still more that the government can do, as discussed below.

**Criminal justice focus:** The Home Office is the central government department that leads on domestic violence. As a result, the government’s response to the problem is focused more on criminal justice than on victims’ needs. Failing to address victims’ mental health, for example, means that victims are not helped to recover from their trauma.

**Short-term funding of services:** The government has seemed to favour short-term funding for pilot schemes and roll-out funding for expanding geographic coverage of existing services, rather than providing secure long-term funding.

**Focus on high risk victims:** The government’s focus is on high risk victims because prioritisation can prevent murders (see Box 4 on assessing risk). This is understandable where there are limited resources, but it means that many who are not deemed high risk are often not well supported. In addition, risk is dynamic and it can escalate quickly. More

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**Box 4: Definition of ‘high risk’**

The Metropolitan Police have a Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Model. It categorises the victim’s risk according to many factors, including:

- whether the victim and abuser were separated;
- whether the victim was pregnant or had a new baby;
- whether the abuse was becoming more frequent or more violent;
- whether there were cultural issues to be aware of;
- whether the perpetrator had been stalking the victim; and
- whether there was any sexual assault.
support services are needed for women not classed as high risk so they too can stay safe and rebuild their lives.

**Children of domestic violence victims are neglected:** There is very little funding available for specialist children’s services, both inside refuges and outside.

**Little work to prevent domestic violence:** Attitudes and behaviour need to be changed, through public awareness campaigns and targeted work in schools.

**There are massive gaps in services:** For example, one in three local authorities does not have a women’s refuge. Since 2003, most refuge beds have been financed by a Supporting People funding stream that was ring-fenced to domestic violence. In 2006, however, the ring-fence was removed so ‘there is no longer any form of secure funding framework for these services’. In 1975 a select committee recommended there should be one refuge place per 10,000 people, and despite this recommendation being upheld by further select committees, refuges only provide one-third of this recommendation.

**The role of local authorities and local agencies**

Central government plays a key role in formulating laws and guidelines that address domestic violence, but it is local authorities that play the lead role as the providers of many essential services for victims, including housing and social care. They also have a statutory responsibility to work with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder. As 16% of violent incidents are characterised as domestic violence related, it is usually included in local crime reduction strategies.

In recent years there has been significant progress in addressing domestic violence at the local level. The biggest improvements are the increase in partnership working between local agencies—the police, local authorities, housing, social services, probation, health and charities—and the recognition that a coordinated response to domestic violence is key. Many local authorities now have MARACs and advocacy services in place, domestic violence fora (a strategic body for local partnership working) and domestic violence coordinators (to increase awareness of the issues and to encourage partnerships). The coordination of agencies involved in domestic violence is something that was introduced and promoted by the voluntary sector and adopted by local authorities and local partnerships. How this translates into practice will be discussed later in this chapter.

There are still a number of problems with local government and local partnerships that leave many women unsupported and at risk of abuse. For example:

- **One in three local authorities does not have a local domestic violence service.** This is despite the Local Government Association guidance that ‘work to tackle domestic violence is part of local authorities’ core business—not an optional extra’.

- **Limited training for local agencies.** Because of the sheer volume of issues that police, health and social services have to deal with, domestic violence training is not always a high priority. The repercussions, in terms of women’s safety, are potentially huge. Front-line agencies need ongoing training on how to identify victims.

- **Like the central government, local authorities are too focused on criminal justice.**

- **Partnerships that do exist are not always effective.** For example, some domestic violence fora have been criticised for being talking shops.

These are not our only criticism of local authorities and their partners. Throughout the rest of this chapter we highlight other areas in which they fall short.

**How are charities tackling it?**

Charities are leaders in the field of domestic violence. Charities first brought the issue of domestic violence to the public’s attention, they set up the first refuges, they continue to innovate and share best practice, and they pioneered the coordinated response to domestic violence now being rolled out by the government. Charities also provide the majority of specialist women-only services to victims of domestic violence. Victims need and want specialist services, with staff that have a deep understanding of their needs and how they can be supported most effectively.

More specifically, charities tackle the issue of domestic violence in the following ways:

- **tackling myths about domestic violence, and raising awareness of where victims can get help, through large-scale public education campaigns;**

- **educating schoolchildren on gender issues, including domestic violence, to change young people’s attitudes;**

- **running helplines to provide practical and emotional support at the time of crisis and afterwards;**

One in three local authorities does not have a local domestic violence service.
Half of men believe domestic violence is a private issue for the partners to sort out.

The following diagram is a navigation tool. It is used throughout the report to structure our discussion of activities delivered by charities. The activities fall under three categories: prevention, provision of services, and prosecution and justice.

The BBC commissioned an ICM poll in 2003 to form a better understanding of the public’s attitudes to domestic violence. The results were very revealing:

- 28% of men think that domestic violence is acceptable if their partner had been nagging them;
- 50% of men believe domestic violence is a private issue so it is for the partners to sort out; and
- only 54% of men said they would intervene or call the police if they became aware that someone was kicking and mistreating their partner. Yet 74% of men said they would intervene or call the RSPCA if they became aware that someone was kicking or mistreating their dog.23

Domestic violence cannot be prevented unless attitudes and, ultimately, behaviour change. The government is doing very little in this space, so charities have stepped up to the mark to try to fill the gap.

Public education campaigns

Charities, such as the national charity Refuge, run large-scale media campaigns to raise awareness of domestic violence, to challenge the myths surrounding it, and to change some of the attitudes towards domestic violence that are commonplace in society. They also aim to reach out to the women and children who are victims of domestic violence, to let them know that they are not to blame and they are not alone, and to advise them where to get help.

Public education campaigns can highlight the impact of domestic violence and encourage victims to get help.
Violence in all its forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse. A recent survey showed one in five teenage girls has been hit by a boyfriend, one third of teenage girls say that cheating justifies violence, and over 40% of all girls said they would consider giving a boy a second chance if he hit them. Refuge’s campaign asks young women to be ‘the generation to say no to domestic violence’.

It is difficult to measure how effective such campaigns are at changing attitudes, let alone changing behaviour. NPC does not know of any that have been properly evaluated. It is easier to measure how well these campaigns reach out to victims of domestic violence. Visits to Refuge’s website and calls to the National Domestic Violence Helpline increased significantly following ITV’s domestic violence week on This Morning. ‘Recognising abuse’ was the most visited web page, suggesting that the programme succeeded in reaching out to women.

During Refuge’s whole four-month campaign, there were 15,000 extra hits to Refuge’s website. The campaign only cost £2.30 for each extra victim who was prompted to visit the charity’s website for help or information, an important first step to becoming safe from violence.

**Education programmes in schools**

Preventative work around domestic violence in the school setting is important to reach the next generation early, to mould attitudes and teach young people that domestic violence is never acceptable. Research shows that the majority of young people are confused about the issue of domestic violence and want to learn more.

However, preventative work around domestic violence and other forms of violence against women is delivered in Personal and Social Health Education (PSHE) classes which are not part of the core curriculum.

NPC has come across a number of education programmes for use in schools that attempt to raise awareness and, more ambitiously, change attitudes. Most are designed by local domestic violence fora or local authorities. The Westminster Pack was commissioned by the local Domestic Violence Forum in 2002 and has been flagged as a model of best practice. The programme was initially run in secondary schools but has now been extended to reach primary schools. This is important because behaviours are often set before children reach secondary school age. The pack itself includes activities on dealing with conflict, building friendships, supporting someone who is being treated badly, and how boys and girls should treat one another. The Scottish charity, Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, designs and distributes an educational pack, The Respect Pack.

These educational programmes tend to be run for a short period, perhaps a couple of months or so. Children need to be educated over the long term if their attitudes and behaviour are really going to change. Womankind Worldwide, a UK-registered international charity, recognised the need for more long-term work, and it is over half-way through its five-year pilot. The evaluation, which is running alongside the pilot, should produce some interesting findings about whether or not education programmes in schools are an effective way of shaping positive attitudes towards relationships and gender issues in the younger generation.

**Early intervention by training professionals**

Research shows that around a third of domestic violence cases start or escalate in pregnancy. We know that women often approach A&E and GPs to treat their injuries, perhaps several times, yet still do not receive the help that they need to keep safe. If nurses, GPs, health visitors and midwives routinely asked every woman about domestic violence, then agencies could respond earlier, saving women from further abuse and even death.

The west London charity, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, trains staff at the A&E and walk-in health centres in Hammersmith and Fulham, to screen routinely for domestic violence, record patient responses and refer those affected by domestic violence to services that can help women stay safe (such as advocacy services, which will be discussed later on in this chapter).

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence does not collate results of this work, partly because the Department of Health will not allow individual files on patients to be examined. What the charity does know is that just under 2% of patients who were questioned were deemed at risk and referred to the local advocacy service, ADVANCE. These women are receiving help that they would not have got previously. It cost around £17,000 to run this project in A&E and one of the walk-in centres.

**Message for donors: prevention and early intervention**

It is logical for donors to invest their money in activities that prevent domestic violence from occurring in the first place. After all, prevention is better than cure and the government is investing little in this area. However, the evidence base for activities aimed at changing attitudes and behaviour is limited. That is not to say that donors should not invest in such activities. Given the attitudes that prevail in society today, there is a pressing need for educational work, whether it be through mass media campaigns or education programmes.
Domestic violence

from abuse, women and children may need psychological and emotional support to help them come to terms with the abuse and suffering they have experienced.

The following section discusses the various services that women and their children might access in order to meet their needs (see Figure 10). Charity activities will be discussed separately to help donors understand how effective they are, and whether or not donors have a role to play in funding them. It is important to note at this stage that charities do not always fit into one box—many provide more than one of these services. For instance a local Women’s Aid charity may provide a helpline service, outreach, advocacy, children’s services, drop-in centre as well as safe housing. It is also important to highlight that there is an enormous variation in service standards. This is why the Home Office has commissioned Women’s Aid Federation of England (WAFE) to draw up service standards, to make the services for victims of domestic violence more consistent, and to help donors gain a better understanding about who and what they are funding.

Funding activities that intervene before the abuse escalates can prevent victims from enduring more serious abuse, and perhaps even death.

Victims of domestic violence have multiple needs. At the time of crisis, they need information about where to get help and a secure place to stay. When they are safe, they may need legal advice to take out injunctions, practical support finding a more permanent place to stay and to live independently, emotional support during any trial and help understanding the court system. Once away from abuse, women and children may need psychological and emotional support to help them come to terms with the abuse and suffering they have experienced.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline receives a call every three minutes. One quarter of the callers need a place of refuge.
support. This free, confidential helpline currently has three roles.

- **A lifeline.** It provides support to women in crisis, helping them to find a space in a refuge.
- **Advice and information.** It informs women of their legal and housing rights, and signposts them to domestic violence services in their area.
- **A listening ear.** It gives women the opportunity to talk about the abuse, and how they are feeling. For many women this will be the first time they have talked about what is happening to them.

The helpline also offers support to friends, families and other agencies that are calling on behalf of the victim.

'I called [the helpline] because I was so scared. I thought he was going to attack my kids—he’d said he would—and I didn’t know what to do or where to go. He went out to see a friend and I just grabbed them and ran. It took a while but the helpline managed to find us a refuge that day. I don’t want to think about what would have happened if we’d stayed at home.'

Helpline caller

The helpline was launched in 2003. In early 2008, the helpline received 443 calls a day, or a call every three minutes. Around one quarter of callers to the helpline are in a crisis (had just been threatened with or experienced domestic violence) and required refuge services.

The helpline staff currently answer 66% of calls and the average call length is 12 minutes. The helpline partnership would like the call answer rate to increase to 98%, perhaps through introducing a triage system so that callers in crisis are prioritised.

This service has not been evaluated, but evaluation is something the helpline funders and the charities running the service are eager to do. One way to measure success could be to record how many crisis callers (around one in four callers) actually move into refuges as a result of their signposting. This is something the partnership is exploring. It is more difficult to ask the remaining three out of four callers who did not need a refuge how they benefited from the advice and support. Calling a woman back may be out of the question; if the perpetrator answers the phone and finds out she is seeking help, it could put her in danger.

Despite the lack of formal evaluation, we do know that the helpline is wide-reaching, and that it has saved women’s lives.

Aids in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all run 24-hour national domestic abuse helplines. These helplines are either fully or part-funded by the devolved governments, and it is for historic reasons that there are four separate national helplines, rather than one UK-wide national helpline.

There are still many local domestic violence helplines running across the country. The Women’s Aid website (www.womensaid.org.uk) allows people to search for helplines and other domestic violence services in their local area.

Helpline staff use UKrefugesonline to locate refuge bed spaces for their callers. It is owned by Refuge and Women’s Aid Federations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This is a secure, online vacancy monitoring database of domestic violence services across the UK. It provides helpline staff and other domestic violence services with up-to-date information on vacancies in refuges. Prior to the establishment of the database, helpline staff had to ring around refuges in order to locate a free bed. This was extremely time-consuming and an inefficient use of resources.

**Who pays?**

The National Domestic Violence Helpline costs around £1.2m to run each year. Around two thirds of funding has come from the Home Office, Comic Relief and the London Councils, which have worked extremely closely with the charities since the helpline’s inception. Approximately one third of the income is raised by the partner charities, Refuge and WAFE. As with other government co-funded initiatives, long-term funding is not guaranteed so the future of the helpline is not entirely secure.

I rang [the helpline] in the middle of the night and in a state of shock. The woman I spoke to on the helpline understood what I was going through. She helped me start thinking about my options.

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Helpline caller

Workers on the National Domestic Violence Helpline. Every three minutes someone calls the helpline.
Box 5: NPC’s visit to a refuge

The refuge that NPC visited is an unmarked, unremarkable suburban house, on a leafy street in west London. We were not allowed to know the address, so we were met by one of the Refuge staff at a tube station nearby, before walking the short distance to the refuge. We were greeted by the warm and welcoming staff in the front room of the house.

We were shown the only vacant bedroom, a sparsely furnished but tidy room. An adjacent communal bathroom was well-used, but clean. The kitchen was divided into several zones, each with its own stove, fridge and cupboards, allowing several families to cook for themselves at once. Two large tables sat in the middle of the kitchen space. The area felt spacious and clean (cleaning is shared on a rota system by the residents of the house). The other side of the large room was a comfortable lounge area. An afternoon tea had been prepared for us, and we sat down for a coffee with three women residents. All three women were from outside of London. Most residents travel to a refuge outside of their local area because the nearest place of safety is not in their own neighbourhood. However, even if they are living locally, or the perpetrator finds out where she is staying, it would be very difficult to access the premises. During our conversation, we saw a man approach the front door. All residents and staff looked visibly strained, until one of the staff went to the door to ascertain his business.

The first woman we spoke to had a primary school-aged son. They had been staying at the refuge for nine months. It was their second stay in a refuge. She told us that ‘even though we are homeless and live in one room, my son is happier at the refuge than when we were at home.’

The second woman was a young, single, softly spoken Asian woman who had fled her abusive family. It was her first week at the refuge and she still seemed to be coming to terms with what had happened to her.

The third woman, also young, only opened up at the end of our conversation, but seemed to enjoy the distraction of having company. She told us that a key benefit of being in the refuge was that the other women pushed her to be sociable, when at first she had felt more inclined to isolate herself.

When we asked the women what they thought donors could fund, they answered: more staff in the refuge; activities for residents such as trips to the theatre and the beach, to help them be more sociable and make friends; and counselling services, especially to ease the transition from in-house refuge services to independent living.

Refuges often have shared living and cooking space, like this one.

Message for donors: helplines

The National Domestic Violence Helpline is very important for victims and NPC would hate to see it fold. At the moment its long-term financial situation is uncertain, so any private investment would be risky. When this situation has stabilised, NPC will consider whether there is a role for private donors in supporting this helpline.

Housing

Safe accommodation is a priority for women and children escaping domestic violence. Local authorities have a responsibility to provide suitable accommodation for this group of women who are classified as ‘priority need’ under the Homelessness Priority Need for Accommodation Order (England) 2002.

Women and children need a range of housing options to choose from. This is because their needs differ according to individual circumstances. Some may not like living with other women in refuges or may not meet the criteria for living in a refuge; some will want to move to a different part of the country to escape their abuser; and others will want to stay in their own home because the upheaval of moving will be too much for themselves and their children.

This section will discuss the different housing options available to women escaping domestic violence, how effective they are, and whether or not donors should fund them.

Refuges

Refuges are a lifeline (often literally) for many women and children who feel unable to stay in their own homes, either because the perpetrator is still there, or because he may return to abuse them. Most refuges are members of the Women’s Aid Federation (which coordinates over 500 local services for victims of domestic violence). According to the WAF survey, in 2006 there were 3,530 bed spaces in England, providing safety to nearly 17,000 women and 20,000 children.

Refuge living

Women usually access a refuge through the National Domestic Violence Helpline, an advocate, or a local domestic violence service. They can stay there overnight, or they can stay until they are re-housed.

On average, a refuge will have between eight and ten bed spaces in it. Some refuges are made up of individual rooms, with communal living and cooking spaces. This suits some women, who like the busyness and the...
company (see Box 5). However, many find it difficult sharing with lots of women and their children, and find it hard not having their own private space. The more modern refuges provide women and children with self-contained flats. All residents are assigned a key worker, who they can go to for emotional, practical and legal support at any point during working hours.

Due to housing shortages, many women are forced to stay in refuges for up to a year because they have nowhere to move on to. In London, for example, the average stay for a woman in a refuge was 173 days in 2006/2007, which rose to 217 days in specialist refuges for BME women. This is most unsatisfactory, especially if they are living communally and have children.

Refuge services

Many people do not realise that refuges do more than just provide women and children with a safe place to stay. Many refuges provide women with practical and emotional support. For example, victims at one of Refuge’s houses in west London have a key worker who helps each woman to plan her next steps. Staff help women with safety, finances, longer term accommodation, communicating with the police, children’s welfare and legal issues. Women can access counselling once a week if they wish (although this service is rare). Other refuges, such as North Tees Women’s Aid in Hartlepool, provide advocacy services and specialist support for children, which will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. NPC believes that good refuges provide all of these services, and act as a ‘one-stop shop’ for victims to help them go on to live independently, free from violence.

More generalist housing providers, such as housing associations, do not provide these services for domestic violence victims, nor do they have the expertise. Due to changes in the commissioning process, larger housing associations are being commissioned by local authorities to provide housing-related support to victims of domestic violence, and small, charity-run domestic violence refuges are losing out. NPC is concerned about this new trend, as many women will not get the specialist support they need.

Strict criteria about people they can house

In order to protect the residents, refuges have strict criteria about people they can and cannot house. The refuge address is kept secret, residents cannot have any male guests, and a lot of refuges do not accept women with boys over the age of 14. In most cases women will not want to part with their children so refuges will not be appropriate for women with older boys.

Other refuges do not take women involved in prostitution, or women with drug or mental health problems. They say this is because their chaotic behaviour can upset the other women and children, and because they do not have the expertise to deal with them. The Nia Project in Hackney is one refuge that does provide specialist support for these socially excluded groups of women.

The Stella Project helps London organisations to provide better services for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence who also have problems with drug or alcohol use. The Stella Project is a project run by the Greater London Domestic Violence Project and the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance. The Stella Project also provides other agencies with training and toolkits to tackle the issues of violence and substance use together, to tackle each issue more strategically.

Bed shortages

Other women are turned away because there are no bed spaces. For example, 21 of the 23 refuge providers in London received 2,300 requests for support* in 2006/2007 that they were unable to meet because their refuges were full. There are not enough bed spaces for women, despite a requirement that there be a minimum of one refuge place per 10,000 population in each local area. Over one quarter of London boroughs do not meet this target.

What do refuges cost?

Some refuge providers are reluctant to reveal their costs, because they competitively tender against housing associations and other non-specialist accommodation providers to provide services. The 2007 accounts for one large refuge provider suggest that each refuge bed costs an average of around £420 per week. Another refuge provider told us that it costs around £250 per week for refuge accommodation and support in London.

Who pays?

Accommodation costs are paid for by Housing Benefit if the victim does not have the means to pay herself. A government pot of funding known as Supporting People† pays for housing-related support such as staff salaries, support costs, administration, outreach and resettlement work. Supporting People accounts for over half of the annual income

* This does not represent the total number of women turned away because it is very likely that each woman would have made a number of requests to other refuges after being turned down initially.
† The Supporting People programme was set up in 2003 and provides housing-related support to vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence. In 2006/2007, £61m of Supporting People funding was spent on domestic violence services.
Sanctuary schemes are extremely valuable for women who wish to stay in their own homes, in familiar surroundings near their friends and families. However, some women may want to move away because they are in fear of the perpetrator. Some women living in sanctuaries have become prisoners in their own houses because they are too afraid to step outside.

Sanctuary schemes are paid for by local authorities because they are required to prevent homelessness, and sanctuary schemes are an excellent way of doing this. However, the voluntary sector is concerned that women are being pushed into opting for sanctuary schemes because many local authorities are more concerned about reducing homelessness and cutting costs than in making sure the victim has the most appropriate type of safe housing. Installing security systems in a sanctuary costs between £750 and £1,000, which is much less than the cost of providing her with a refuge or other accommodation.

Women must be given a choice, and local authorities have a statutory duty to offer women a range of housing options.

Do refuges keep women safe?

Refuges are essential. They provide women with a safe place to stay, away from violence and abuse. Refuges save lives.

Refuges are effective in the short term, but we do not know if they keep women safe in the long term. NPC is not aware of any refuges that track women systematically after they leave the refuge when they no longer have contact with outreach staff. There is no way of knowing whether these women have gone on to lead independent lives or whether they have returned to their abusers. Although, even if women return to the abuser, they are then at least aware about the alternatives available.

Sanctuary schemes and other housing options

If a woman chooses not to stay in a refuge, she can access alternative housing options, either by contacting the local authority housing advice service directly or through her advocate. Advocacy services such as the Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit and ASSIST in Glasgow will advise the victim of her options, and will work with the local authority to help her access her preferred choice.

Local authority sanctuary schemes are an option for women who want to stay in their own home (see Box 6). Private lettings and temporary accommodation (eg, hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation) are also used by women escaping domestic violence. These housing options have their own restrictions and problems: only women termed as ‘vulnerable’ or women who have children will be able to access a private letting funded by the state. Temporary accommodation is often unsatisfactory, especially when women have to stay there for months or years.

Message for donors: housing

Local government is responsible for providing housing for victims of domestic violence, so donors should not fund bed spaces or pay for the upkeep of refuges. However, donors can improve the lives of people living in refuges by supporting some of the other services that they provide, services that Supporting People and Housing Benefit do not cover:

- children’s services, including play therapy, counselling, group work (discussed in more detail in ‘Children’s services’, below);
- counselling for women, to help them come to terms with the trauma they have experienced; and
- bed spaces for women with no recourse to public funds.

These services will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming sections.
Children’s services

Women are not the only victims of domestic violence. Their children are too, both directly and indirectly. Men who are violent to their partners are likely to be violent to their children. Children can also suffer indirectly through witnessing domestic violence. So much so that the definition of ‘harm’ in the Adoption and Children Act (2002) now covers instances where a child has ‘suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another’.

‘My daddy was biting my mummy and she was choking and she was nearly dead. I was screaming myself to death with my mummy.’

Child survivor

The potential damage of domestic violence on a child’s health, well-being and development is a great cause for concern (see Impact on children). Children need specialist support, in refuges and outside, to help them come to terms with what they have experienced. Charities offer a number of different types of support services to children, including:

One-to-one support, including counselling and play therapy. Research into the needs of children affected by domestic violence found that their two primary needs are to be safe and to have someone to talk to.23 One-to-one support gives children the opportunity to speak about what they have witnessed. For many this is the first time they have had the chance to talk about what has happened and to be reassured that they are not to blame. Refuge provides counselling for children and their mothers in some of its refuges (see Box 7).

Individual parent-child activities. It is common for mother and child to seek to protect each other by not talking about painful memories, yet talking can help speed recovery. Research shows that a good parent-child relationship, particularly with the mother, can buffer children from inter-parental conflict and is the best predictor of a good result.60 Talking to my mum is an activity pack, developed jointly by the NSPCC and refuges, to help and encourage children to open up and talk about their experiences to their mother. Mothers reported that the scheme improved their relationship with their child, while children commonly said that they liked the opportunity to spend time with their mum.60

Parallel group work for mothers and children. ‘What about me?’ is a 12-week community group domestic violence programme for children who have witnessed domestic violence and their mothers. Children attend weekly sessions that cover a range of different issues, including understanding abuse, recognising feelings, reducing self-blame and safety planning. Each session is preceded by a mother’s group on the same topic, the focus of which is to understand the domestic violence from the child’s perspective. The programme builds children’s self-esteem, increases school attendance, if this has previously been an issue, and they have an increased awareness of healthy relationships and what to look for in a partner. The parallel work is particularly important for mothers, who are less likely to return to an abusive relationship as they understand the impact it has had on their children. Children’s understanding of their own behaviour also increases. The Nia Project in Hackney recently piloted this programme.

Group work with children. Some refuges and children’s centres, such as Let Go in Carlisle, offer group work to children affected by domestic violence. Group work with other young people helps children to discover that they are not alone in having had bad experiences.23

‘I really enjoy the girls group. I would miss this support, it makes me less worried’.

Cara, 11 years

Child advocacy. ASSIST, in Glasgow, offers a child advocacy service to children affected by domestic violence. The child’s advocate works closely with the mother and her advocate to monitor risk to the child; provides support and information to the mother to help her protect and assist her child; works with other agencies such as the police, the procurator fiscal, Victim Support, and social services to ensure the...
The mental well-being of women and their children is not being anywhere near effectively [provided for] so the recovery of women is prolonged.

Refuge provider in London

A recent study of London boroughs found that only 6 out of 33 projects have any government funding for children’s work.

child’s needs are being addressed, particularly in the court setting.

Child contact centres. The London charity, Domestic Violence Intervention Project, runs Stephen’s Place, a purpose-built, child-friendly centre. This provides a range of support for children who have been exposed to violence including supervised contact with their fathers, assessed contact and direct therapeutic intervention.

Websites and information for children. The Women’s Aid website, Hideout, provides help, information and support for children and young people who are living with violence, have experienced violence in the past or who know someone else who is looking for help and information. It is presented in a readable, child-friendly way, providing information on what domestic violence is, how it affects children and where to go to get help. Children can also allay their fears about going to a refuge by visiting the interactive cartoon virtual refuge. In 2007 the website received around 300 hits each day.

As well as providing services directly, charities also lobby the government for improved services for children of domestic violence victims. A number of charities, including the Greater London Domestic Violence Project and WAFE, are calling on the government to put protective policies in place to safeguard against abuse, and against exposure to abuse.

Who pays?

Supporting People contracts do not cover children’s services. In fact there is no central funding stream available to children affected by domestic violence. Refuges and domestic violence services in the community have to rely on grants from local authorities, grant-making trusts and private donors. This is difficult because funding tends to be in the form of grants, rather than contracts, so funding is short term and the services become unsustainable. Children’s services in refuges are severely under-funded. A recent study of London boroughs found that only 6 out of 33 projects have any government funding for children’s work. Only one was fully funded.

Message for donors: children’s services

More than half of refuge inhabitants are children. Despite this, children’s services in refuges are constantly under threat of closure because very few receive on-going statutory funding. Donors should consider funding children’s services, both in refuges and outside. Without the support of private funds many of these services will not survive.

Counselling

Many victims of domestic violence suffer from mental health problems because of the violence and abuse they have experienced, sometimes over many years. Some of them will need psychological support, such as counselling. Counselling is not appropriate for women living in an abusive relationship because they are still in crisis. Women should be able to access counselling services when they are safe and have left the abuser. It is then that they have the breathing space to come to terms with the trauma they have suffered.

So what are a victim’s options? She could access mainstream mental health services for counselling or psychotherapy. However, many mainstream health services do not understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how it impacts on mental health. In addition, waiting lists for statutory services tend to be very long, typically between six and nine months. Some refuges offer psychological support to their residents. However, these services tend to be few and far between because of lack of funding. NPC has heard anecdotes of women returning to controlling relationships because they are not strong enough to say no.

‘The mental well-being of women and their children is not being anywhere near effectively [provided for] so the recovery of women is prolonged and they are more likely to relapse into a controlling relationship or not fully recover from their trauma.’

Refuge provider in London

Refuge, offers women psychological support known as person-centred therapy in two of its refuges, helping 50 women and 100 children each year. Psychological support costs around £2,000 per person. Refuge’s psychological services used to be more widespread but were cut back because there was insufficient funding for them.

Women who have experienced rape by their partner can access women-only counselling through rape crisis centres. There are currently 48 centres in England and Wales, of which 38 are affiliated to Rape Crisis (England and Wales).

There is limited hard evidence of what works in terms of psychological support for victims of domestic violence. The government is currently trying to determine just this through its Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme (VVAPP). In the absence of systematic, long-term evidence, abundant anecdotal feedback can be used to show that counselling delivered by refuges and rape crisis centres improves women’s confidence, self-esteem and motivation. If nothing else, it gives them space to talk to someone with a sympathetic, understanding ear, something many victims have never been offered.

‘My psychologist is helping me understand Mark’s behaviour was not my fault. Yet no matter how many times she says it, I find it
Outreach and group support

There are many thousands of victims of domestic violence, mainly living outside of refuges, who cannot access support services for ‘high risk’ victims such as advocacy. Some of these women may have moved on from a refuge, others may never have lived in one. Some will have left their partners, and others will still be co-habiting. These victims can feel incredibly isolated and alone, either because they are living on their own for the first time or because they feel unable to share their experience with friends or family. Those who have never lived alone before will need practical support and advice. Outreach services and support groups help women to overcome their loneliness, and move on with their lives.

Outreach

Outreach is used to describe a number of different things. NPC defines outreach as one-to-one support, outside a drop-in centre or a refuge. Sometimes this is also called ‘floating support’. Outreach workers provide support to women who are still living with the perpetrator and those who are living independently. Outreach workers from charities such as York Women’s Aid provide the following support:

- information for victims living with perpetrators about where to get help;
- practical support for women trying to live independently, such as finding housing, budgeting and paying bills, claiming benefits, cooking and keeping safe; and
- moral support and a listening ear.

In 2007, Refuge conducted a survey of 104 women who had used its outreach service. Of the 29 who responded, 97% got the help they were looking for when first speaking to an outreach worker; 93% felt listened to and understood; 97% felt supported to manage their safety and also felt safe meeting their support worker. In spite of the positive responses, the low response rate (just 27%) highlights our earlier point about how difficult it can be for charities to get feedback on what happens once women are no longer using their service.

Group support

A number of local Women’s Aid charities, such as EVA in Redcar, run support groups. Support groups vary in terms of what they provide to women. Some offer information and practical advice, some run social activities for women and others run the Freedom Programme, which provides women with information on why domestic violence happens and how to protect themselves in the future. Most importantly support groups give women the opportunity to meet others in the same situation.

There is little hard evidence on the role of support groups in helping victims of domestic violence. However, anecdotes from women show that the groups give them the opportunity to talk about shared experiences and give each other mutual support. Women learn that they are not alone, and that they are not to blame.

‘To talk to other women and discuss each other’s situation—I realised it wasn’t really “my fault” as I had been brainwashed into believing’.

Vicky, survivor of domestic violence
Support groups are also an important next step for women who are moving on from refuges and advocacy services. It can be very difficult to go from having intensive one-on-one support to nothing at all. Support groups help to bridge that gap.

Message for donors: outreach and group support
Outreach and support groups can be accessed by victims who are not classified as ‘high risk’. Services for these women are limited, as the government’s efforts have been mainly channelled into services for ‘high risk’ victims, so donors should consider funding charities that offer these services.

Anecdotally, we know that outreach services and group support help women to overcome isolation, become more independent, and build their confidence and self-esteem. This is vital, because women tend to return to their violent partners if they find life on their own too difficult. However, there is limited evidence of their results. If donors are interested in funding such work, NPC recommends donors also fund evaluations of the service to get a better understanding of what works for women who fall outside the government’s current service provision.

Financial support
Financial advice
Many forms of domestic violence can be described in terms of power and control. One way an abuser can control his victim is by controlling her finances. This can include controlling her access to cash, not letting her have a bank account, and taking on debt in her name. It seems that little formal research has been done in this area. However, anecdotal evidence from experts consulted by NPC suggests that there are very high rates of financial abuse among victims of domestic violence.

‘Even if I needed shampoo I had to ask him first and then when I got back from the shops he would check it was a cheap one...There was always money for the things he needed... Now I’ve left him I hardly have any money anyway, but being able to go down to the shops and pick out whatever I want makes me feel like the richest woman alive.’

Therefore many women may need advice on financial activities, especially if they have left the abuser and are trying to start living an independent life. These include:

- setting up a new financial identity (if she has fled to a refuge and left all her papers and identification behind);
- transferring bank accounts to a new address without revealing the location to her abuser;
- dealing with debts forced on her that legally remain her responsibility;
- learning financial independence if she has been denied this in the past; and
- claiming welfare and benefits.

There is a dearth of policy work in this area either from government or from charities. Many charities recognise the importance of the issue for their clients, but lack the resources to tackle it strategically. Refuge is developing an increasing policy focus in this area and is developing a financial guide for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Grant-making
Women and their children frequently flee from their home with nothing apart from the clothes they are wearing. They can be penniless and in desperate need of emergency items such as toiletries and clothing. There is a provision for crisis loans from the state but this is usually limited to an advance on their benefits to pay for food. The Family Welfare Association in England and Wales provides small grants to families escaping domestic violence to tide them over the crisis period.

A social worker wrote to the Family Welfare Association on behalf of one of her clients, who had recently been re-housed with her toddler after fleeing domestic violence. She wrote:

‘[Sarah] is living with very few possessions. She is desperate for floor coverings as her child is learning to crawl and walk and the concrete floor is so rough and cold that she cannot put him on the floor. She would particularly appreciate help with a carpet but the material standards of the home are very poor and we would be grateful for as much help as possible. She has been turned down for a social fund loan as she has one running for furniture from her last flat [which she recently escaped from].’

Message for donors: financial support
Financial abuse of victims of domestic violence is an under-funded and overlooked area. Private funding could be used to fund a large-scale survey to assess the extent of financial abuse suffered by victims of domestic violence, and to ensure future activities are targeted appropriately. Private donors could also fund links between banks and local domestic violence services to help victims to access services without the usual forms of identification and without compromising their safe locations. Similar links could be forged with debt advice agencies to help them teach victims about financial independence, while understanding the issues they face. Finally, donors could fund charities that make small, emergency grants to families fleeing abuse.
As we have seen, domestic violence victims do not just need somewhere safe to stay. They also need counselling to help them overcome trauma, practical advice on staying safe and living independently, advice on injunctions and support through the court system. But how does a woman with no knowledge of the system begin to access the services she needs at a time when her self-esteem has been stripped away, she is isolated, she is frightened and she does not know if authorities will believe and help her? Advocates help each woman to navigate the complex web of agencies that deal with domestic violence, so she can access the services she needs to keep herself and her children safe from harm.

The advocate usually comes into contact with the victim just after she has had a crisis, such as a police call out or an emergency visit to hospital.

Figure 11 shows how advocates move a woman along a pathway to safety. They do this by providing her with support in a crisis; managing her risk on an ongoing basis; helping find a place to live after the abuse; supporting her through the courts; meeting with specialist agencies such as housing authorities and solicitors; and helping her to rebuild her life following the abuse.

ADVANCE, a charity in Hammersmith and Fulham, was one of the first advocacy projects in the UK. It provides 24-hour crisis response, support and advice to around 600 women every year, over half of them ‘high risk’, requiring intensive help. Other examples of advocacy charities include Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit, ASSIST in Glasgow and HALT in Leeds.

Advocacy training

There are not enough advocates in the UK. Existing accredited advocates are overworked and cannot deal with the demand and workload: they receive four times the number of referrals and twice the number of active cases compared with the recommended workload level. In addition, most advocacy projects only work with victims classified as ‘high risk’, because prioritising clients is pragmatic given limited resources. So ‘high risk’ women do not always receive the high standard of care that they need, and women who are not ‘high risk’ usually go without help of this sort.

CAADA runs accredited training programmes for advocates, to increase the absolute number of advocates and to improve the standard of service provided by those already working. The trainees learn how to assess and address risks, support survivors, and work with other statutory agencies responding to abuse.
Box 8: How a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) helped ‘Karen’

Police brought Karen’s case to MARAC because they had been to her house seven times in six months. On each occasion Karen refused to make a complaint against her partner, and said that they had just been arguing. At the MARAC, the housing officer reported that they had repaired the property (fixed broken windows and doors that Karen had reported were damaged by youths on the estate) on dates that followed immediately after the police attendances. The A&E representative noted that Karen had attended casualty on all seven of the dates that the police attended the address. On the last visit, Karen had received treatment for a broken wrist and collar bone. A&E also had information about an attendance by one of Karen’s children who also suffered a broken wrist, reportedly from falling when playing. This was the day after Karen attended with broken bones.

The picture of Karen’s family suddenly fell into place at the MARAC. All agencies can now help Karen properly in the future; all have put a marker on their files so that if there is a repeat incident, they will know that Karen is a very high risk victim of domestic violence, whichever member of staff is on duty.

Karen’s advocate spoke to her and identified that she would benefit from a civil injunction to protect herself and her children. This has been put into place and the police are aware so that if her partner breaches the injunction, they can act appropriately.

Training costs £2,250 per advocate, but since each advocate supports 80 women each year, even if she only works as an advocate for three years, training costs less than £10 per family helped.46

‘Historically domestic violence has been seen as an intractable problem. The provision of professional advocacy is changing this and saving lives.’

Diana Barran, Chief Executive of CAADA

A qualified advocate with CAADA training is referred to as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). There are currently 375 IDVAs in the UK. Although more IDVAs will be trained in the future, referrals should start to come from health services and other practitioners, rather than just from the police, so IDVAs are likely to remain overworked for years to come.47

‘CAADA training has made a difference to the quality of our service—you have to see it to believe it’.

West Berkshire Women’s Aid

Coordinated agency response

There are two levels at which the agency response can be coordinated: at the individual case level (through the MARAC) and at the borough or area level.

MARACs are meetings that bring together all the services that should be helping victims in the local area to coordinate their response.

Agencies that attend include the police (who usually chair the meeting), advocates, social services, Victim Support, health, housing, probation, child protection services and education representatives. The purpose of a MARAC meeting is to share information about ‘high risk’ victims and to put together a multi-agency plan for each victim. Each MARAC will address around 20 cases, and meetings occur fortnightly. Box 8 is a case study of how the MARAC shares information and coordinates the agencies’ responses to each victim.

MARACs were pioneered by charities. Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit and Standing Together Against Domestic Violence developed the MARAC in the UK and promoted it to government as an excellent way to keep women safe and prevent re-victimisation. MARACs are now funded by the government, which is rolling them out across the country.

In some areas of the UK there are pockets of best practice where agencies involved in dealing with domestic violence are coordinating their response to domestic violence at the borough level. Charities such as Standing Together Against Domestic Violence help agencies to work together effectively by agreeing protocols and procedures for communicating between agencies and their individual responsibilities, so every victim receives the same quality support. The charity monitors each organisation’s performance and holds each accountable.

Other examples of a coordinated response are the family justice centre model (see Box 9) and the coordination of the specialist domestic violence courts, which is discussed later in this chapter.

Are advocates and a coordinated agency response effective?

There is evidence that advocacy is effective at keeping women and their children safe from harm. For example, 83% of ADVANCE’s clients said that after being involved with ADVANCE they were safer and the abuse had stopped. The other 17% were either continuing to live with the perpetrator or still being abused but they no longer wished to receive ADVANCE’s support.

There is further evidence that combining advocacy and a coordinated agency response is effective. Results from areas that use both responses will vary according to how committed other partners are. Some of the most comprehensive data comes from the charity Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit, which coordinates agencies involved in dealing with domestic violence and runs advocacy services:

- repeat victimisation fell from 33% to less than 8%;
• over 40% of victims whose cases went to a MARAC meeting had suffered no further abuse after a year. The only cases that get to a MARAC are high risk, so this is an impressive result. (CAADA, using data from Wigan, estimates that women whose cases go to a MARAC have been victimised between 8 and 12 times in the previous year);
• women who did suffer further abuse reported it to authorities much earlier;
• the number of victims who refused to make a complaint after the police were called fell from 54% to 14%; and
• many more children were reported at risk of harm (up from 10% of police call outs to more than 60%).

Using recent data obtained from the MARAC areas, there has been an estimated average reduction of 50% in repeat victimisation among those cases reviewed at MARAC.6

As well as reducing the risk of repeat victimisation, advocacy decreases the risk of women withdrawing evidence in the courts and increases the chance of a conviction. This is because women are supported through the court system. This is discussed further in the section on ‘Advocacy in the courts’.

Who pays?
Advocacy was pioneered by the voluntary sector, and it continues to be delivered by charities. Until recently, most advocacy services were funded by private donors, grant-making trusts and a few enlightened local authorities. In 2005 the Home Office started providing seed-funding for CAADA trained advocates (IDVAs) because it recognised that advocacy was an effective way to keep women safe, yet there were not enough advocates in the country. To date it has provided seed-funding for advocates in the 65 specialist domestic violence court areas. After a year of seed-funding, charities have to raise funds for the IDVAs’ service from elsewhere, as they did in the past. Advocacy services that do not receive Home Office funding also have to rely on voluntary income and support from local authorities. The Home Office provides some funding for advocate training, and funding for the roll out of MARACs. Local authorities and police may fund the costs of coordinating agencies in the borough, but nothing is guaranteed. Advocacy training is also funded by grant-making trusts and through fees.

Box 9: The Croydon Family Justice Centre

The Croydon Family Justice Centre opened in December 2005, and has worked with 3,000 people since then. Its mission is to reduce domestic violence and murders, and provide for the welfare and accommodation needs of victims escaping abusive homes. It has co-located agencies in the same building, and the result is a client-focused, one-stop service for victims of domestic violence.

This is the first family justice centre of this type in Europe. It currently houses over 40 agencies including the Metropolitan Police, social services, health and mental health services, family lawyers, children’s services, Women’s Aid and the Samaritans. The result is a safe place for victims to go where they can immediately access the integrated services they require. It provides on-the-spot access to the help that victims need to rebuild their lives, and removes any need for clients to wait in line at agencies in multiple locations.

It is built on the model of the San Diego Family Justice Centre, which has seen great success. The federal government in the US has heavily funded its duplication across the country.

NPC is not aware of any formal evaluation on the Croydon Family Justice Centre. However, some academics and practitioners in the sector are not so sure about the model’s effectiveness in the UK. They are concerned that all the expertise and knowledge about domestic violence will be isolated between the four walls of the family justice centre, instead of being spread into the mainstream.

Message for donors: advocacy and coordinated agency response

Advocacy works. It is effective and it saves lives. It only costs about £500 per woman made safe.* Donors should fund advocacy projects to increase their capacity so they can reach out to more women. Donors could also fund advocate training work, as there is a shortage of skilled advocates. Such support has high leverage: NPC estimates that training a professional advocate costs less than £10 per family helped.

MARACs, although effective, are primarily the responsibility of the state, and so represent a limited funding opportunity for private donors. However, charities whose central focus is coordination, at the level of the victim, the level of the borough, and in the courts (discussed later) deserve support. There are only a few examples of best practice across the country. Private funding could be used to roll out this model and reach out to more agencies involved in domestic violence.

* Based on an advocate salary of £25,000 per year plus 20% ‘on costs’, assuming each advocate has a case load of 80 women, and that 75% of these women experience a ‘significant improvement in safety’.7

Chapter 3: Domestic violence
Box 10: Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)

Victims of domestic need quick and effective protection through the criminal justice system. Until recently the court system did not provide this. Too few perpetrators were being taken to court, and many of those who were taken to court often escaped conviction. In addition, many women felt very unsupported during the process so would often withdraw from giving evidence. To improve conviction rates, and provide women with more support through the court process, the government introduced Specialist Domestic Violence Courts.

How do they differ from regular courts?

In contrast to regular courts, SDVCs should have:

- advocates who offer victims support and one point of contact through the court proceedings;
- trained frontline domestic police officers;
- dedicated prosecutors, specially trained magistrates and legal advisors;
- separation of perpetrators and victims in court; and
- either a fast-tracking of domestic violence cases, where cases are prioritised as that they go through the court system as quickly as possible, or a clustering together of domestic violence cases on a designated day each week or month.29

The first specialist domestic violence court in the country to hear trials was the west London Magistrates Court in 2002. Since then the government has been rolling out SDVCs across the country. In 2005/2006 there were 25 SDVCs in England and Wales. There are now 65.

Domestic violence crimes are unique: we know who the perpetrator is and where he lives. Further abuse and homicide are predictable and some are preventable. Yet women are still being abused and murdered, and men still get away with it. More perpetrators need to be convicted to protect women from further violence, to hold perpetrators to account, and to ensure justice is done.

The national conviction rate for domestic violence is not known. This is because there is no criminal offence of ‘domestic violence’ so it is very difficult to calculate given the range of criminal offences that might take place in a domestic violence incident. However, Police and Crown Prosecution Service data (England and Wales) indicates that 18.8% of those arrested for domestic violence crimes were convicted in the second quarter of 2007.266

So why is the conviction rate for domestic violence so low in this country? There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- a low rate of charging by police;
- lack of evidence to secure convictions;
- lack of knowledge about domestic violence in the courts; and
- a high withdrawal rate by victims before and during the court process because facing an abuser is a terrifying ordeal.

In order to improve the conviction rate, police, magistrates and the Crown Prosecution Service need to be trained on domestic violence, share information and coordinate their actions and be held to account. In addition, the victim needs to be given support through the criminal justice process to reduce the chance of her withdrawing her testimony and to make the process less traumatic for her.

Coordinating the specialist domestic violence courts

The government is rolling out Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) to try and improve the conviction rate (see Box 10). They are not effective unless all agencies act together and share information, have an understanding of domestic violence and how this crime may affect their practices, and be held to account to ensure they are providing the best possible services to prevent future crimes. The charity Standing Together Against Domestic Violence coordinates the SDVC in west London, trains agencies involved and holds them to account.

Coordinating agencies and sharing information

When agencies do not talk to each other or share important information, women remain at risk of violence. For example, the police might follow best practice guidelines and arrest and charge an abuser instead of giving him a caution, but the court might then release him on unconditional bail, leaving him free to continue to harass or assault the victim. Standing Together Against Domestic Violence staff attend court each week, to observe, monitor and address issues as they occur and ensure important information is shared quickly.

Training for agencies

Agencies that interact with the perpetrators and the victims need training on domestic violence. For example, the police who are called out to the crisis need to ask the right questions, gather sufficient evidence, and

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* The arrests were recorded in the same time period as the convictions (second quarter of 2007), so those arrested and those convicted do not represent the same sample of people.
Holding agencies to account
The agencies and the courts also need to be held to account to ensure they are following protocols put in place to keep victims safe. SDVCs are supposed to identify and track domestic violence cases.* Standing Together Against Domestic Violence has found that this does not always happen. Its staff use privileged access to police, probation and advocates’ records and attend court each week to note down the results of trials. Standing Together Against Domestic Violence collates the information and shares it with the agencies to highlight where they are under-performing and perhaps putting victims lives at risk.

Effective coordination can make more women safe and hold more perpetrators to account. In Hammersmith and Fulham between 2003/2004 and 2005/2006:

- the number of arrests for domestic violence increased from 34% to 44% of crimes;
- the number of offenders arriving at the court increased from 221 to 261;
- the average number of days between charge and completion decreased from 96 to 84;
- the percentage of withdrawals or case discontinuances decreased from 27% to 14%; and
- early guilty pleas increased from one in five to one in four cases.70

Between 2002/2003 and 2005/2006 the proportion of recorded crimes converted into convictions increased from 3.5% to 7.4%.70 All these measures have converted the conviction triangle into a rectangle, shown in Figure 12:

Figure 12 shows a rise in domestic violence incidents in Hammersmith and Fulham between 2003 and 2006. This does not necessarily mean that more abuse has occurred; domestic violence is persistently under-reported, but women are more likely to report abuse when they know it will be treated seriously.

Advocacy in the courts
As mentioned earlier, part of an advocate’s role is to support women through the court process and act as single point of contact for the victim throughout the proceedings. Advocates may just provide advice and emotional support, or they may attend meetings with a woman or even attend on her behalf if she is too frightened or intimidated to go.

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* Domestic violence is not itself a specific statutory offence, and it is not a police or criminal justice system reporting requirement. If a perpetrator has been charged with grievous bodily harm, or any of the range of statutory offences that he might have committed in assaulting his victim, there is no consistent way of knowing whether it is in relation to domestic violence or not.
HALT, an advocacy charity in Leeds, specialises in providing legal support to women experiencing domestic violence. It gives women legal advice on personal protection via a legal advice line and advocates, keeps women up to date with developments in their cases at the specialist domestic violence court, prepares women for their appearances in court, accompanies them there and provides them with support on the day.

“You’re a nobody in the court system… without HALT, I wouldn’t have had the backbone of information to go through with it. It was like a rock.’

Woman supported by HALT.

An evaluation of the early pilots of the SDVC model found that victims were more likely to participate in the criminal justice system if they were assisted by advocates. Perpetrator programmes

It seems strange that the perpetrators who cause the problem of domestic violence factor little in the solutions. To date, government policy has largely focused on the criminalisation of acts of domestic violence and on giving victims appropriate and timely support, not on monitoring the behaviour of men. It would seem logical to have appropriate perpetrator programmes in place to stop re-offending. However, there are very few available.

Perpetrator programmes are run in prisons and in the community. Some are court-mandated (therefore compulsory) and others are voluntary. They are run by probation services and charities. Charities are more likely to run services for victims alongside the perpetrator programmes. NPC approves of this model because it is a way of engaging women, and keeping them up to date on whether or not their partner is making progress.

Do perpetrator programmes work?

Not everyone is supportive of perpetrator programmes. In fact they are quite controversial.

- Their effectiveness is mixed. Only some of the perpetrators who complete programmes stop their violent and abusive behaviour.
- They can increase the risk to victims by prolonging the unrealistic expectations of some women that their partners will change, which may encourage them to stay with them and jeopardise their own safety.

Nonetheless, there is a role for effective perpetrator programmes. The Home Office says that effective programmes can at least ‘reduce dangerousness’, and can therefore make some women safer. Perpetrator programmes also play a role in monitoring men on a regular basis. Experts say perpetrator programmes are helpful because they help women realise that they are not to blame and that it is their partner who is the problem.

The most recognised programmes are accredited with the charity RESPECT. These organisations have agreed to put the safety of the victim at the heart of their work, reinforce the concept that abusive behaviour is unacceptable, screen perpetrators for suitability, work with other agencies to address other issues in the perpetrator’s life (eg, drug or alcohol addiction), work with women’s services and, in the case of mandatory programmes, have consequences for failure to attend.

Domestic Violence Intervention Project in London is RESPECT-accredited and runs perpetrator programmes alongside their services for women and children. Men attend once a week for 32 weeks. The model is based on the theory that men’s use of violence is grounded in their general belief system. Staff use dynamic role play and cognitive behavioural therapy and the men have to write a log every week. There is a high attrition rate: from referral, 70% drop out before completion, and 30% drop out even before the initial assessment.

RESPECT also runs a telephone advice and information line for people who are concerned about their behaviour towards their partners. The phone line will also take calls from others who are concerned about a perpetrator, including professionals. Because there are so few perpetrator programmes available, they tend to have long waiting lists.

Message for donors: prosecution and justice

Despite knowing who the perpetrators of domestic violence are, and where they live, too many men continue to get away with abuse. Donors can help to improve the conviction rate and protect women by funding advocates to support women through the courts and funding agencies that coordinate the specialist domestic violence courts. Donors could also fund charities that run perpetrator programmes that try to reduce violent behaviour in men. After all, perpetrators are the cause of the problem so they should be part of the solution. Given the range in their effectiveness, NPC recommends donors fund programmes that are RESPECT-accredited, and are also well monitored, documented and evaluated.
Summary for donors

Considering the scale and impact of domestic violence, donors may wonder whether private funding can make much of an impact on the issue. However, NPC has seen strong evidence of what works to help victims escape violence and start to rebuild their lives. Private funding could extend such innovative approaches and pockets of best practice to help victims across the UK. Of the range of approaches that we considered throughout this chapter, NPC has selected three key funding priorities for donors who wish to tackle domestic violence, shown in Figure 13.

Coordinating agencies

Many agencies help victims to escape abuse and rebuild their lives: the police, health services, courts, refuge providers, housing agencies, various children’s services and other organisations are all responsible. Other agencies are also involved in dealing with perpetrators. When these organisations do not work together properly, victims may not get timely and adequate support, and perpetrators may not be brought to justice.

Charities such as Standing Together Against Domestic Violence offer a way to improve how agencies respond to victims, by playing a coordinating role. Coordination offers a way to leverage existing resources to ensure that they prioritise tackling domestic violence and do so efficiently. Private funding could be used to roll out the best models of coordination, to benefit victims across the UK.

Advocacy

Since no single agency acting alone can deal with domestic violence, it can be difficult for victims to piece together the help they need. Advocates can navigate this complex system on behalf of victims and there is strong evidence to show that they are effective at keeping victims safe.

Charities that provide advocacy, such as HALT, make it easier for victims to escape domestic violence. They offer a cost-effective approach to tackling domestic violence, by helping people access services that already exist. Private funding can help to ensure that charities that provide advocacy to victims can offer long-term support.

Private funding can also train more advocates to provide the same standard of service to victims wherever they live. Donors could fund charities such as CAADA, which provides accredited training for advocates.

It costs less than £10 to train an advocate for every family helped. Advocates then cost about £500 for each woman made safe from further abuse—a small price compared to the thousands of pounds incurred by not adequately dealing with victims.

Psychological support

Many victims of domestic violence suffer from mental health problems as a result of the violence and abuse they have experienced, sometimes over many years. Many need psychological support, such as counselling. However, many mainstream health services do not understand the dynamics of domestic violence and how it impacts on mental health, and women may be forced to wait months to access statutory services.

Some charities, such as Refuge, offer psychological support to women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Such support costs around £2,000 per person. Although there is limited quantifiable evidence of the effectiveness of such therapy for victims of domestic violence, many women say that it helps them. Due to a lack of funding, these services tend to be few and far between, and need private funding.

Figure 13: Funding priorities for tackling domestic violence

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<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Provision of services</th>
<th>Prosecution and justice</th>
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No single organisation acting alone can deal with domestic violence effectively.
A woman is more likely to be sexually assaulted than she is to get breast cancer. But, unlike cancer, sexual violence is rarely discussed. There is a stigma attached to sexual crime, the result of attitudes that lay the blame on the woman for the rape, not the perpetrator. Women may also blame themselves, and can be reluctant to ask for help for fear of not being believed.

Rape is traumatising so it is not surprising that the majority of victims suffer from mental health problems. Others are fearful of going out, suffer flashbacks, lose the ability to hold down a job or maintain relationships. Over half of rapes are carried out by someone the victim knows, so victims may also feel betrayed.

Support should be available for victims who need it to cope with the after-effects of an attack. But victims often end up waiting months for counselling, and statutory services do not provide specialist women-only sexual violence counselling. Many victims turn to the charitable sector for support, but charities are also overstretched. The result is that the majority of women do not have access to specialist sexual violence services in the UK.

**Funding priorities**

Sexual violence has been given relatively little attention by government and there is massive need for funding for both new and existing services.

Donors should fund charities like rape crisis centres, which have helped women deal with the trauma of sexual violence for over 30 years. At these centres, victims can receive the kind of counselling and support that helps overcome their mental health problems.

Donors could also fund public education campaigns that aim to change some of the stereotypes about sexual violence and its victims, and also, perhaps, prevent sexual violence.

**Key Facts**

- Every day, more than 2,000 women are sexually assaulted.
- Only one in seven rapes is reported to the police. Of the cases that do get reported, only 6% result in a conviction of the perpetrator.
- Around half of rapes are committed by a current or former partner. As recently as 1990, it was legal for a man to rape his wife.
- Nearly one in five people thinks a woman is partly responsible for being raped if she is known to have had many sexual partners.
- There is no national rape helpline in England and Wales.
- In 2007 over half of all rape crisis centres in England and Wales faced closure due to a lack of funding.

**Victims’ voices**

‘I never imagined he would rape me. Twice. And then tell me he’d done nothing wrong, that it was his right as my husband and that I was a frigid cow.’

‘It was hard to do this but I was able to share it with [the counsellor]. I am now not so frightened if a man comes near me on a bus or the Metro.’

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- There is no national rape helpline in England and Wales.
- In 2007 over half of all rape crisis centres in England and Wales faced closure due to a lack of funding.

Victims of sexual violence find counselling beneficial. It gives them space to talk to someone sympathetic and understanding.
Rape and sexual assault

Box 11: ‘He didn’t just rape me—he has stolen my independence, my confidence, my freedom and my happiness.’

Alice woke one night to find a half-naked intruder kissing her. She had no idea who he was, although he was telling her that she knew him. When she resisted, he put a 10 inch pair of scissors to her neck and raped her. Alice was only rescued when her flatmate came home and interrupted an attempt to rape her again.

Afterwards she was traumatised. This was exacerbated by the fear that she had contracted HIV or had become pregnant. The 38-year old social worker now felt her life had completely changed. Where before she had been independent, she was now afraid to be alone in strange places. She felt nervous on crowded public transport. Alice had to move house, because she couldn’t bear to sleep in the same room, but even in her new house, she repeated checked that all the windows and doors were locked.

Despite the fact that she felt she was using all her strength to stay strong, she still cried every day. She found it hard to sleep because of nightmares. Fortunately for Alice, there was a lot of evidence against her attacker, and so he was convicted and given a life sentence. On sentencing Alice said: ‘He didn’t just rape me—he has stolen my independence, my confidence, my freedom and my happiness.’

What is sexual violence?

Definition and legislation

Sexual offences include rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault (sexual touching), and administering a substance with intent to commit a sexual offence.

A serious offence

The law on sexual violence was reformed in 2003, when the definition of rape was broadened to include forced oral and anal sex. For the first time, a statutory definition of consent was also included. ‘A person consents if s/he agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.’ (Sexual Offences Act (2003) Section 74.) If a defendant claims that he believed that consent was given, he has to show that he has reasonable grounds for that belief.

Sexual violence offences are very serious and the penalties reflect this. Rape and sexual assault by penetration carry the maximum punishment of life imprisonment. The maximum penalty for sexual assault is ten years.

What is the scale of the problem?

How many women are affected?

Rape and sexual assault are shockingly prevalent. According to the British Crime Survey 2006/2007, 5% of all women between the ages of 16 and 59 have been raped (or suffered attempted rape) and 24% have been sexually assaulted.

Sexual violence overwhelmingly affects women—92% of rape victims are women.

Hidden and unreported crimes

Unlike Alice (see Box 11), many victims of sexual violence do not disclose the attacks to the police. There are a number of reasons for this: some women feel ashamed, or they blame themselves, or they know about the low chances of conviction and therefore do not bother reporting it to the police.

In 2005/2006, 62,081 sexual offences were recorded by the police. Of these, 14,449 were rapes. However, most rapes are unrecorded. The British Crime Survey puts the number of rapes at around 100,000 every year. This suggests that only around one in seven rapes is reported to police, despite the seriousness of the crime.

Who are the women?

There are many stereotypes about the typical victim of sexual violence. However, these stereotypes are misleading; the issue cuts across class, race, education and nationality. At the same time, certain groups are more likely to be sexually assaulted than others.

- Younger women. Women aged between 16 and 24 are almost four times more likely to have experienced sexual assault in the last year than women aged 45–49. The proportion of rape victims who are under 20 has been increasing.

- Survivors of childhood abuse. A disproportionate number of childhood survivors of abuse are involved in prostitution.

- Women who have a disability. It is estimated that there are 1,250 cases of sexual assault against adults with a learning disability in England and Wales every year. This is very likely to be an under-estimate, because some people with disabilities have difficulty communicating. Sex offenders may even target women with disabilities because of their vulnerability. Perpetrators may think that a disabled victim will not be believed by the police or in court, or will be prevented by a lack of understanding of what constitutes a crime from reporting an assault to the police. Women who depend on a carer are in a vulnerable situation if that relationship becomes abusive.

There are around 100,000 rapes every year. Fewer than one in seven is reported to the police.
• **Women who drink alcohol.** Alcohol was involved in 34% of rape cases reported to the police, and in 81% of cases where the victims alleged that they had been drugged. Alcohol makes women more vulnerable, weakening their defences and reactions. It also makes them a target for perpetrators who think they are less likely to resist an attack or to report it to the police.

• **Women involved in prostitution and women trafficked into sexual exploitation.** This is discussed further in later chapters in this report.

**Who are the perpetrators?**

The much-feared stereotype of a rapist is a man who hides in bushes with a knife as women walk home at night. The reality is very different: in the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator is someone known to the victim. According to the British Crime Survey, only 11% of serious sexual assaults were committed by strangers. Ninety seven per cent of callers to rape crisis helplines knew their assailant prior to the assault.

There is a strong link between sexual violence and domestic violence. Over half of serious sexual assaults are committed by current or former partners. One police officer provides a striking insight from his experience:

> ‘The interesting thing is how closely linked domestic violence and rape are. The man who will commit rape is very much the man who will commit domestic violence. They almost go hand in hand. If you’re willing to slap a woman, you’re willing to rape. It’s just another form of abuse.’

Police officer

As recently as 1990, it was not illegal for a man to rape his wife. Most women who are raped by their partners do not report the attacks to the police, despite the fact that they can be frequent and very violent. A qualitative study revealed that rapes within marriage are often brutal, with one third being described as ‘sadistic’.

Around half of adult sex offenders report that they started their aberrant sexual behaviour in their adolescence. Teenagers account for up to one third of all sexual crime.

**What is the impact?**

**Physical health problems**

Sexual violence leaves many scars on its victims. There is the immediate possibility of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy resulting from rape. Around 5% of rape victims become pregnant from the attack. Sexually transmitted infections are found in up to half of rape victims. There may be other serious injuries as a result of a violent attack, such as broken bones and internal bruising.

**Gynaecological problems**

Gynaecological problems are common as a result of physical injuries and survivors often suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome brought on by the stress.

**Mental health problems**

Sexual violence causes severe anguish, whether it is a one-off incident or carried out over a number of years. Unlike victims of other crimes, victims of sexual assault often blame themselves. They feel stigmatised and find that others treat them differently. To make matters worse, there is still a taboo against discussing sexual matters, even if they are crimes. Many victims suffer further anxiety because they fear they will not be believed if they report the assault they have suffered.

It is not surprising then, that most sexual violence victims develop mental health problems. A recent study by the Department of Health identifies depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, drug or alcohol problems, self-harm and suicide as long-term effects of abuse for women.

**Drug and alcohol problems**

Women find it difficult to cope in the aftermath of an attack, so many turn to drugs and alcohol to dull the pain. Over two thirds of women with alcohol and drug addiction problems are survivors of sexual abuse. This can in turn lead to other health problems.
I was the one given the life sentence. He destroyed my life: because of the instruments he used to torture me, I had to have a total hysterectomy, and couldn’t work or look after my children, and my marriage eventually broke down.

Victim of rape

Lasting effects on everyday life
Rape and sexual abuse can have a detrimental or devastating impact on a woman’s entire life: many victims are too scared to go outside. They lose their confidence and, with it, their ability to make friends, maintain relationships and hold down jobs.

‘I was the one given the life sentence. He destroyed my life: because of the instruments he used to torture me, I had to have a total hysterectomy, and couldn’t work or look after my children, and my marriage eventually broke down.’

What is the cost?
It is difficult to put a cost on such trauma, particularly as it will affect each woman in a different way. Estimates put the cost of each rape at over £120,000, in emotional and physical impact, the cost to the health service and the cost to the criminal justice service.\(^7\)
The total cost of sexual violence each year is £25.7bn (see Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women).

Intervention is necessary to help people before the attack threatens to ruin their lives. The health costs of sexual violence are over £2,000, and understandably these costs rise if mental distress is not tackled.\(^7\)

How is government tackling it?
The following sections will discuss the progress the government has make in tackling the problem, what it is currently doing, and criticisms of its actions to date.

Both central and local government have a role in tackling sexual crimes and in providing for victims of sexual violence.

Recent improvements
First ever action plan on sexual violence
The government brought out its first ever action plan on sexual violence and abuse in April 2007. It is a cross-government document because of the nature of the issue: sexual violence fits within many agendas, including public health, safeguarding children and vulnerable people, and reducing crime.
The plan was developed after widespread consultation with charities. The plan is a big step in the right direction because it shows the government is aware of the gaps in its existing work such as the lack of support available to victims, the lack of preventative work in schools and the lack of training for frontline police officers who come into contact with victims soon after an attack.

Before producing the action plan, the government had introduced a number of initiatives to improve services for victims, to raise the conviction rate of offenders and to prevent offending by making men aware of the issue of consent. The action plan commits to rolling out many of these new initiatives, including sexual assault referral centres and sexual violence advocates.

Rolling out Sexual Assault Referral Centres
Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) are an integrated service where male and female victims of recent sexual assault can access health and support services. They are jointly run, as well as generally funded, by the police and health services. SARCs provide forensic medical examinations, emergency contraception, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and counselling. Some SARCs also employ advocates, to help victims who want to go through the criminal justice system (see Box 12 for more information).

The first SARC was set up in 1986. Recently, the government has rolled out SARCs in England and Wales. There are currently 20 in England and Wales, and plans for this to rise to 40 in 2008. There are no SARCs in Northern Ireland, and only one in Scotland. The Home Office has provided nearly £2m of start up capital to local police and health partnerships over the past four years. In 2007/2008 it will invest a further £1.1m in SARCs, and aims to double the number of SARCs by 2011. However, this only provides seed funding, so the future of this service is uncertain.

Funding for sexual violence advocates
Like domestic violence advocates, sexual violence advocates provide information and guidance to help victims through the legal process and help them address their safety concerns, so that they can live without fear of violence. Advocacy in the sexual violence sector is a long-standing method of supporting victims. Advocacy has been used by rape crisis centres and SARCs for many years to provide support to victims, and recently the government has recognised its worth by funding advocates. Qualitative evidence from SARCs and rape crisis centres show that victims value this support. The government has funded accredited advocate training, delivered by the charity CAADA, to around 40 advocates. CAADA accredited sexual violence advocates are known as Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). ISVAs are spread thinly across the country.
Proper police training is vital to improve the low conviction rate (see Box 13 on conviction rates). Speedy and correct evidence collection is considered vital to a proper prosecution. This has been moving further up the agenda for government and police in recent years, and progress has been made in the past five years. Specially trained police officers gather evidence and liaise with victims. These specially trained officers also help with victim care and take some victims to a SARC if there is one in the area.

Introduction of specialist rape prosecutors

The Crown Prosecution Service has been trying to improve the conviction rate for sexual offences, and in the last five years has introduced new measures. Its policy now is that all serious sexual offences should be prosecuted by a specialist rape prosecutor. These prosecutors are given training on sexual violence and on liaising with the police to make sure the case is as strong as possible. There should also be special training in sexual offences for barristers and court staff, as well as special measures such as screens to make it easier for victims to give evidence.

Box 12: Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs)

Having one place where women can go after an assault makes the process easier for the victims. SARCs have a warmer, friendlier feel to them, compared to many of the police stations that women would otherwise have to go to for invasive procedures such as forensic medical examinations. In addition, victims are able to self-refer to SARCs, so they can go without having to report the crime to the police, and decide later whether to report.

Research shows that speed is important in securing evidence and increasing the likelihood of a conviction. Therefore it is a good idea to get the forensic medical examination done as quickly as possible, even if the victim has not decided to go to the police yet. That is what happens in a SARC. It means that, if the victim does report the crime, even much later, they still have a chance of a prosecution because the forensic evidence has already been collected. In addition, the first SARC, St Mary’s in Manchester, found that clients welcome the proactive contact that SARCs can give and this has reduced withdrawals from the criminal justice system.

SARCs are a good innovation. They are especially good at ensuring that evidence is properly collected. However, they are not the whole solution. Very few people currently have access to SARCs; they are predominantly in metropolitan areas. SARCs are only available to people who have been recently assaulted and they tend to focus on rapes. (Most people who call a rape crisis centre are calling about a rape that happened a few years ago so these women go unsupported at SARCs). SARCs also only provide counselling for up to ten weeks, yet many women need more intensive support than that. It is important that SARCs are seen as one tool of many in helping the victims of sexual violence.

The Haven, in Camberwell, is one of three SARCs in London. Before it opened in 2000, the forensic examination by police was often a harrowing experience. Victims were forced to wait for hours before they were examined, during which time they were not allowed to go to the toilet or wash or smoke in case they contaminated evidence. Some victims had to wait 12 hours to see a (male) specialist examiner. The Metropolitan Police realised that it was not providing an adequate service, which is why it now funds the Haven.

The Haven aims to see each ‘client’ within the hour, regardless of the time of day or night. The entire procedure is over in about three hours. The centre is as comfortable as possible. Clients are given a hot shower, new clothes and a toiletry pack.

Criticisms of the government’s response to sexual violence

Since the government only released its action plan on sexual violence in April 2007, it is too soon to judge its efficacy. There are a number of criticisms that can be made of the state based on its performance to date.

Sexual violence services are woefully under-funded

Central government gives the sexual violence sector very little money, as identified in Chapter 1. Partly because of this, sexual violence charities suffer from severe under-funding. This results in gaps in services for victims across the country. The majority of women have no access to the specialist counselling services of rape crisis centres and rape crisis centres have been closing down. Despite improving victims’ mental health, less than 13% of rape crisis centres get funding from Primary Care Trusts.

SARCs are currently concentrated in metropolitan areas, leaving whole swathes of the country with no provision. While central government’s commitment to rolling out SARCs is commendable, SARCs still need commitment from local partners to work. It is already being reported that many of the newer SARCs are finding that securing sustainable...
Box 13: Low conviction rate for rape

For sexual offences, especially rape, the conviction rate* is notoriously low. The conviction rate for rape stands at just 6%. It varies widely, from 14% in Northamptonshire to 1.6% in Suffolk and less than 1% in Gloucestershire.

The blame for the low conviction rate does not lie entirely with the courts. Most cases drop out before they go near the courts. Only 19% of complaints go to trial. Of those cases that do go to trial, 55% end in convictions. However, half of these convictions were because defendants pleaded guilty. If the defendant contests the charge at trial, an acquittal is the most likely outcome.

Figure 14 shows the attrition at several points within the criminal justice system. It shows what happened in 676 cases from eight police forces in England and Wales. Only 13% of this sample of rape crimes ended in a conviction: a very low number. However, this number becomes even lower when you take into account that the police have been repeatedly criticised for putting too many cases into the ‘no crime’† category in rape cases, and therefore the starting point should be nearer to the number of reports (676) rather than the number of crimes (576).

As well as this, only 32 of those 72 convictions were for rape. The rest were for lesser sexual offences such as sexual assault, or even for non-sexual offences. If you take this into account, the conviction rate for rape is much closer to the national conviction rate of 6%.

Why is it so low?

His word against hers

People may believe that the low conviction rate is simply a consequence of the fact that there are often no witnesses to a rape, and that the defence is that the woman consented. They believe it is inevitably hard for a jury to convict someone beyond reasonable doubt, unless the burden of proof for rape is lower than for other crimes. However, there is supporting evidence of rape in 87% of charged cases. Therefore, in the majority of cases, the trial should not come down to his word against hers.

There is also a common belief that many women make false allegations of rape. This may be a consequence of the low conviction rate, since people assume that defendants are being found not guilty because the jurors believe that a crime did not occur. Research suggests, however, that the percentage of false allegations is no higher for rape than for any other crime. Only 3% of rape allegations are false.

Despite these facts, there is widespread disbelief of victims by the public and by police.

‘Well honestly it’s because most of them are not telling the truth … I think what happens to a lot of adults is they may have consensual sex with somebody, they get found out by their husband, partner, whoever, then they say “Oh but I didn’t consent” as a way of getting themselves out of trouble … I mean I have dealt with hundreds and hundreds of rapes in the last few years and I can honestly probably count on both hands the ones that I believe are truly genuine.’

Police officer, 2002

Myths about rape

Myths about rape affect the chances of conviction. Most rapes are committed by someone known to the victim, yet the stereotypical rape is committed by a stranger and involves a weapon and evidence of injury.

Although, the law currently states that a person may lack the capacity to consent when they are intoxicated, even if conscious, many people still believe that women are responsible for being raped if they are drunk.

‘Alcohol has undoubtedly become the new short skirt in the way that people are looking to put the blame and the onus and the responsibility on women rather than men.’

Violence against women expert, 2006

A study of jury deliberations found there is still no consensus on the meaning of important and key terms used in rape trials. These include terms about the issue of consent such as ‘freedom’, ‘capacity’ and ‘reasonableness.’ Some jurors believe that a woman’s silence reasonably equates with consent to sex. Some also believe that physical force and evidence of force is a requisite of rape.

More than any of the other forms of violence against women, sexual violence suffers from these myths and taboos. They can make it hard for women to come forward and report, and hard for them to be believed when they do.

‘At the moment women are raped twice: once by their attacker and the second time by the courts.’

Victim of rape

* The conviction rate is the number of convictions as a percentage of the number of reports made to the police.
† The Home Office definition of ‘no crime’ is that the incident reported is most likely not to have been the result of a criminal act and the police take no further action to investigate. For example, where the offence was recorded in error, or where there is credible evidence no offence took place.
funding is a challenge and therefore they can only offer basic services such as forensic medical examinations, and they have cut services such as advocacy.1 In some areas there is little enthusiasm from statutory bodies, particularly health, to get SARCs off the ground.86, 87

No national sexual violence helpline
Unlike domestic violence, the government does not currently fund a national helpline for victims of sexual violence in England and Wales. Even if there was a national rape and sexual assault helpline, there are very few places that such a helpline could refer victims to for follow-up support. In the government’s 2008 action plan for tackling violence it said it was exploring options for expanding helplines for domestic violence victims to cover sexual violence.2

Little work being done to prevent sexual violence
Work in schools to promote a more respectful attitude to women and healthy and equal relationships between the sexes might help to prevent sexual violence. However, there are currently many different issues vying for limited space in the timetable, and the Department for Children, Schools and Families has shown little interest in promoting this issue.

There is also no public education campaign targeted at potential perpetrators. The Home Office did run a campaign around consent to highlight the change in law. However, this was a short-lived campaign. Many people in the sector believe that attitudes toward sexual violence and violence against women will not change until there is a long-term campaign aimed at doing so.

Low conviction rate despite government’s focus on criminal justice
The government’s response to sexual violence is still very much focused on the criminal justice aspect rather than victim support. Despite this, government has been able to do little to improve the low conviction rate. See Box 13 for the reasons for this.

Box 13: Low conviction rate for rape (continued)
Complaints withdrawn
Many women withdraw their complaints before they get to court. Some of them may simply not want to think about the attack again, and there is no way that society can make it easy for every woman to go to court. However, the culture of disbelief discussed above is very off-putting to women. Many women drop their cases because they suspect that the police do not believe them and therefore think there is no point in continuing, or because they feel that they have not been given enough information and support by the police. Often, the victim would rather drop the case than press for an adequate police response.77 Others cite fear of the trial as the reason they withdraw.

Ramifications of low conviction rate
The low conviction rate has ramifications beyond the lack of justice for victims. Those men who rape but escape conviction are not managed by probation or put on the sex offenders register. They are not monitored so they are free to rape again.

Wide variation in police responses to sexual violence
There is a wide variation in police responses to sexual violence and in conviction rates for rape. This blame cannot all be placed on the police, but many forces do not have police officers who are trained specifically to deal with sexual violence. Good collection of evidence and victim care are paramount in ensuring that cases are accepted by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and are taken to court.

“We have some of the best training in the world available. Every inspection and review in recent years has said so. But they have also said that delivery is inconsistent and that advice and best practice is too often ignored.”

Assistant Commissioner John Yates, Scotland Yard78

Victims feel let down by the criminal justice system
The victim has little influence on the CPS, and if it decides not to prosecute a case there is little she can do about it. Her only option is to pursue a private prosecution.

During a trial, the victim is treated as a witness to the prosecution, so she does not get the same level of support and information from the prosecution lawyer as the assailant gets.

Figure 14: The attrition in rape cases90
from his lawyer. A victim almost never meets the prosecuting lawyer until the trial. She does not have the same access to evidence as the defendant and questions asked by the prosecuting lawyer might prejudice the case against her. Many people do not realise this is the case, and are therefore doubly disappointed when they go to court.

Judges are not implementing the law well enough

The judiciary is independent from government. It is required to direct cases and sentence in accordance with the statutory framework devised by government, but there are no procedures to ensure judges receive training or to change the way they handle cases. There is concern that judges are not implementing the law in the way that government intends. The Solicitor General Vera Baird described it as ‘worrying’ that judges were dismissing rape cases on the grounds that drunken victims had consented. She said it is ‘very, very important that judges understand the law on capacity to consent.’

In June 2007, a man who was convicted of raping a ten-year-old-girl was sentenced to two years in prison. The judge excused this lenient sentence by ruling that the victim appeared to be of the legal age of consent because of her style of dress and make-up. This case was greeted with outrage from charities and politicians alike.

How are charities tackling it?

Not all victims of rape and sexual assault need support to overcome the trauma they have experienced. However, those who do seek support do not always get the emotional and practical help they need from mainstream health services. GPs are likely to treat only the symptoms by prescribing medication, waiting lists for mental health services are long (an average of six to nine months) and they do not provide a specialist service for female victims of rape. Government-run SARCds do offer counselling, but only over the short term, and have criteria about who they can and cannot support.

Therefore, charities play a critical role, by providing long-term, specialist, women-only service to victims of rape and sexual assault. Charities are providing women with the support that they want, in an environment where they are understood, believed and told they are not to blame. As well as providing women with appropriate support, charities are lobbying the government for more resources for victims, and are starting to do some work on prevention. Charities provide victims of rape and sexual assault with a voice that they need, and are working extremely hard to ensure the issue is adequately dealt with by the state and society.

Charities working to tackle rape and sexual assault work in the following areas:

- tackling attitudes and behaviour about rape and sexual assault by running public education campaigns;
- working with young people in schools to change attitudes early on;
- lobbying the government to provide more funding for support services;
- running self-defence classes for women to make them feel safer;
- providing long-term counselling and practical support to victims;
- advocating on behalf of women who are going through the court process; and
- campaigning to improve the treatment of victims in the courts.

We cannot even hope to prevent rape and sexual assault until attitudes change. Many people still think that women are sometimes ‘asking’ to be raped. Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Executive carried out a poll in 2007, which showed that:

- 27% of people think a woman can be at least partly responsible if she is drunk at the time of the attack;
- 26% of people thought a woman bore some responsibility if she wore revealing clothing;
- 32% of people think there should be some burden of responsibility if the woman is flirting; and
- 18% think rape can be a woman’s fault if she is known to have had many sexual partners.

‘If a woman acts like a slut she deserves to be treated like a slut’.

Comment made by one of the respondents to an online survey by Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Executive

Beliefs like these may also affect the willingness of women to report rape and to go to court. If jurors hold such beliefs, they will be less likely to convict assailants.
Education programmes in schools

Education to prevent sexual violence and other forms of violence against women should occur in the school setting as a matter of course. It is delivered in Personal and Social Health Education (PSHE) classes, which are not part of the core curriculum.

As mentioned in the domestic violence chapter, NPC has come across a number of education programmes for use in schools that attempt to raise awareness and, more ambitiously, change attitudes. Zero Tolerance in Scotland and Womankind Worldwide are among the charities that do this (see the Domestic violence chapter for more detail).

Public education campaigns

Charities in the domestic violence sector, such as Refuge and Women’s Aid Federation of England (WAFE), have carried out large-scale campaigns on domestic violence, to challenge people’s beliefs about what is wrong and what is right, and to raise awareness about where to get help. However, because the sexual violence sector is so small, and so under-funded, charities in England and Wales have not had the resources to carry out similar awareness-raising campaigns on sexual violence and rape. Instead they have focused on their top priority, namely service delivery. Rape Crisis (England and Wales), the umbrella body for rape crisis services, intends to do more campaigning work in future, for example, tackling the myths around sexual violence, and raising awareness about where to get help.

Rape Crisis Scotland is launching a campaign about attitudes to rape in spring 2008. It is based on a campaign that was run in the US by the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women called ‘This is not an invitation to rape me’ (see Box 14). This public campaign cost over £400,000 for a billboard campaign, posters, postcards and briefing information.

Some public education campaigns on this issue have been shown to be effective. Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police have run a different type of campaign—one that is targeted at women to help them keep safe, instead of at potential perpetrators. The Safer Travel at Night campaign highlights the risk of using illegal minicabs and publicises alternative ways to get home. Since the campaign started in 2002, sexual offences in minicabs have fallen by 46%.35

Self-defence classes

Some charities run self-defence classes for women, to make women safer when they go out at night. The London charities, Suzy

Box 14: This is not an invitation to rape me

Rape Crisis Scotland has conducted research finding that 40% of people believe that women are partially or totally responsible for being raped if they put themselves in ‘risky’ situations such as going home with a man.

Rape Crisis Scotland is launching a campaign to challenge attitudes that lay blame on the women who have been raped, for example:

- rape is a crime primarily committed by strangers;
- married women cannot be raped by their husbands;
- some women lead men on by dressing or behaving ‘provocatively’;
- women who drink to excess should take some responsibility if they become victims of sexual violence; and

- if a woman engages in some level of sexual intimacy, she has only herself to blame if things go further than she wanted.

The campaign will be on billboards and posters across Scotland. The adverts include images featuring a man and a woman going home in a taxi together, girls on a night out having fun and a bride and groom walking out of the church. All of the images have the slogan ‘This is not an invitation to rape me’ written across them.

Lamplugh Trust and the London Centre for Personal Safety, run courses and give information on how to be safer from violence. The London Centre for Personal Safety has courses especially designed to prevent sexual assault. The training raises awareness, encourages the use of clear personal and physical boundaries and teaches self-defence. Evaluations show that it is successful in reducing participants’ fear of crime.

Message for donors: prevention

NPC believes that prevention is better than cure. We urge donors to fund prevention work where there is evidence base for its effectiveness. The newly-formed Rape Crisis (England and Wales) plans to run campaigns to change attitudes in the future. As we have seen above, Rape Crisis Scotland is about to launch a campaign in Scotland. This sort of work is crucial and currently thin on the ground. There has not been much work on prevention of sexual violence and therefore there are few evaluations. However, other large-scale campaigns to stop people from smoking, and to encourage people to wear seatbelts have proved successful. One can learn from them and hope that a rape campaign would also change people’s behaviour, if it had sufficient investment and was run over the long term. Donors should consider funding campaigns that are sustained for many years. Donors could also consider funding evaluations of campaigns; if the results are positive then the evaluations may serve to bring in additional funding.

The sexual violence sector does not have the resources to carry out large-scale awareness raising campaigns.
Victims of rape and sexual abuse need long-term, specialist support, and many ask for a woman-only service.

Figure 15: The options available to victims of sexual violence.* Many women tell no-one.

Wales and Northern Ireland. It provides counselling by counsellors accredited by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Around a third of the 150,000 clients it sees every year have suffered either domestic violence or sexual violence.

Sexual violence services
A Department of Health survey identified charities as key providers of support and advocacy, delivering high-level interventions by highly qualified staff, with significant unmet demand.20 However, only one in four local authorities in the UK has a sexual violence service (including SARCs).

There are over 100 charities that provide specialist support to victims of sexual violence. Some charities provide support to men, as well as women. Many of these are members of The Survivors Trust, a national umbrella body for survivors’ organisations. The organisations that are members of The Survivors Trust offer a variety of approaches to victims of sexual violence: some deal with victims of childhood abuse, some offer services for men. Some of them will provide specialist long-term counselling in a women-only space, as NPC recommends. Most of these are rape crisis centres which are the focus of this section.

Rape crisis centres
Rape crisis centres are charities that provide long-term, specialist support to women who have experienced rape and sexual assault either as adults or as children. Some rape crisis centres also offer services for victims of domestic violence, which makes a lot of sense.
given the overlap between the two types of violence.

Table 4 highlights the key differences between SARCs and rape crisis centres.

"Women feel more confident and relaxed in a women-only space. This enables survivors to concentrate on their healing process. Most of our service users, when they first come to us, tell us that they would find it impossible to use our services otherwise because they would not feel safe."

What services do rape crisis centres offer?
Rape crisis centres provide some or all of the following services to victims of rape and sexual assault:

- helplines, ranging from providing a lifeline in a crisis to simply being a booking service for appointments;
- counselling and face-to-face support. This is the core work for most rape crisis centres. Some will restrict the number of sessions that women can have, but most will see women for as long as they need support;
- group support, which tends to act as a natural follow on to one-to-one counselling;
- advocacy to support women through the courts and help her to access other services she might need (this is discussed later on in this chapter);
- training for professionals to deliver better support within mainstream services; and
- educating school children. Only a few centres have the resources to do such work.

What counselling techniques are used?
Most rape crisis centres that NPC visited during its research used a talking treatment known as person-centred therapy. This is a non-directive form of counselling that allows women to express themselves in their own time, and come to terms with problems. It empowers women to take control of their own lives, rather than be guided and directed by someone else. This therapy is used for rape victims because women often experience powerlessness and a loss of control after rape or sexual abuse.

Box 15: How Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre helped Debbie
Debbie was 17 when she was raped. She was living in Abu Dhabi with her family at the time. She became involved with the other children of ‘ex pats’ and started seeing one of the young men who was part of the crowd. One afternoon he suggested they go swimming and whilst she was changing in the beach hut he went in and raped her. Debbie was distraught. She had been a virgin and had little knowledge of sex but knew that he had done something very bad. She told her mother when she returned home. Her mother’s response was that Debbie should not tell anyone as it might result in her father losing his job and therefore the lifestyle that they had. Debbie’s family moved back to Scotland two years later.

Debbie did not tell anyone until she was in her 30s. She married and had a family and it was only when her daughter turned 17 that the issues resurfaced and she decided that she needed some support to deal with what had happened to her. She contacted Glasgow Rape Crisis and participated in ten sessions of support. She addressed a lot of the issues that were affecting her, not least her feelings around the response she had received from her mother. She moved onto group support and felt at the end of that she had healed from her experience. She still phones Glasgow Rape Crisis periodically and is doing well.

Some centres, such as Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre, use paid, qualified counsellors to deliver the counselling. Others, such as Savana in north Staffordshire, use volunteers who are trained counsellors, or are in training, to provide counselling. This is one way that the rape crisis service can continue despite the funding problems that blight the sector.

Some centres, such as Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre, term their care ‘support’ rather than counselling and use volunteers who are trained in-house to deliver support over the phone, and during one-to-one sessions (see Box 15).

Is this type of support effective?
The Department of Health is currently carrying out research into the most effective forms of treatment and therapy for victims of abuse, including rape. This will be a great resource, but it has not yet been published. However, medical experts consulted by NPC endorse person-centred therapy or support for rape victims. In their experience women find it beneficial and report that, above all, it gives them a space to talk to someone with a sympathetic, understanding ear, and a place where they are believed and taken seriously, perhaps for the first time.

Table 4: The difference between sexual assault referral centres and rape crisis centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Assault Referral Centres</th>
<th>Rape crisis centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only treat victims of recent assault.</td>
<td>Treat victims no matter when the assault happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only give counselling for a short period, typically for ten weeks.</td>
<td>Give counselling over the long term, typically for as long as the victim needs it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide forensic medical examinations and other medical care.</td>
<td>Do not provide physical medical care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some provide advocacy.</td>
<td>Some provide advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically funded by the police and Primary Care Trusts.</td>
<td>Typically funded by charitable donations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat male and female victims.</td>
<td>Only treat female victims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women have been using rape crisis centres for over 30 years, and there is a body of qualitative evidence that rape crisis centres and the person-centred therapy they offer improve women’s health, relationship and well-being. NPC saw many testimonials from women who benefited from rape crisis centres. 

‘I had severe depression, problems with sex and flashbacks before I had counselling at [the Rape Crisis Centre].’

‘I started to see things more clearly and gained a perspective about the past. I stopped being on such a roller coaster of emotions and [started] to take better care of myself.’

The evidence that has been gathered differs from centre to centre. Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre has had an external evaluation of its service. This showed that all its clients felt that their mental state had improved following their counselling there. Clients appreciated that Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre had helped them to deal with the root cause of their issues, rather than just the symptoms, which many GPs are forced to do. Following treatment, clients were more able to deal with the trauma of the rape, their mental health had improved and they became less dependent on medication. For some of their clients this resulted in improved self-esteem, for others the intervention was life saving, by reducing suicidal feelings, depression and self-harm.

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre in Croydon, has demonstrated that following counselling, clients were better able to take control over their life and their mental health improved.

Costs

The costs of treating victims in rape crisis centres vary depending on whether the centres use volunteers, how long they offer support for and what other services they offer. The cost per user for Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre is around £800, but costs can vary between £600 and £1,100.

Rape crisis centres are in crisis

Many rape crisis centres also have long waiting lists, because they have no funds to take on more counsellors. The average time spent on the waiting list is three months. South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre has a waiting list of around seven months. Despite the valuable service they provide, rape crisis centres are struggling to survive. Every year another rape crisis centre closes, not least due to funding problems. In 1996, there were 60 centres that were members of Rape Crisis Network in England and Wales. Today there are only 38 (plus ten further non-members). Three of these are in Wales. NPC’s report does not deal with Northern Ireland, but there are no rape crisis centres there. The situation in Scotland is a lot better because the rape crisis network is expanding. There are nine rape crisis centres affiliated to Rape Crisis Scotland, two of which were founded in the past year, and a further four centres that are not affiliated.

The map in Figure 16 shows how thinly spread the rape crisis centres are, and how the majority of victims in the UK do not have a rape crisis centre in their area. Rape crisis centres routinely have to turn women away because they do not live in the area.

‘Our helpline is national, so people tend to find the helpline number first, so they ring and say “I need help, can I come over to you?” and sometimes we just have to say “No, we can’t see you”, and it’s dreadful, absolutely dreadful.’

Yvonne Traynor, Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre, Croydon, 2006

In 2007, Rape Crisis (England and Wales) believed that half of all rape crisis centres in England and Wales faced closure due to a lack of funding. Eight centres had to reduce
or close services over the past year.\textsuperscript{96} Some rape crisis centres receive funding from their local Primary Care Trust, but many do not, in part due to budget cuts in the NHS. Most rely on short-term funding from grant-making trusts, which means they cannot plan ahead for the future. They spend a lot of their time applying for funds for the next year. It is not surprising then that the majority of centres have an annual income of less than £100,000. Five of them currently have no money in reserves. Rape crisis centres have managed to survive this financial situation because of the dedication of their staff. In five centres, staff have worked without pay during times of financial crisis, in order to ensure that women could still receive these vital services.\textsuperscript{96}

As we have already seen, there is no national rape helpline in England and Wales. Instead there is a collection of helplines attached to local rape crisis centres. Some of these advertise their number nationally, but do not have the funding or capacity to deal with calls from all over the country. Without a properly supported helpline, it is hard for women to find out what support is in their area, even for those who have some knowledge about services for victims, as NPC researchers can attest (see Box 16).

NPC would like to see a national helpline covering England and Wales. The government is considering extending the domestic violence helpline to cover victims of sexual violence. However, without adequate local services for women to be referred on to, the helpline will only provide limited support. In an ideal world, more local services would also be opened, even before a helpline is set up, which is what recently occurred in Scotland.

‘We’d like more staff and secure funding with service level agreements. We’d like no waiting list rather than seven months, and we’d like to see a network of rape crisis lines across the country, so women can access a service wherever they happen to live. We don’t think that’s too much to ask in 2006.’

Sheila Coates, South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre, 2006\textsuperscript{22}

**A rosier picture in Scotland**

The sexual violence sector in Scotland was once in a comparably fragile state compared to that of England and Wales. However, in 2004 the Scottish Executive stepped in to shore it up. Funding was given to all rape crisis centres to increase capacity. Two new centres were also set up in Lanarkshire and the Western Isles. This was followed by the launch of a Scottish national rape crisis helpline in October 2007 run by the umbrella body Rape Crisis Scotland. The situation in Scotland is therefore much more stable than it is in England and Wales, although it should be noted that

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**Box 16: How hard is it for victims to find help?**

Fairly early in the research process, NPC researchers tried to find out what support services were available for a victim (living in east London) who had experienced rape many months before. The victim had received some counselling through her GP, but months after the attack, she still felt overwhelmed and needed more support. NPC researchers were armed with a little background knowledge, a telephone book and the internet. They also had clear heads having not been traumatised themselves. After 45 minutes of searching, they could not find any specialist counselling services for victims of rape in the area.

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**Figure 16: Map of Rape Crisis Centres\textsuperscript{1}**

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**Peer support for victims**

Amina is a new service for victims of sexual violence delivered by Eaves Housing for Women. Volunteers who have experienced sexual violence give support to women who have recently experienced assault. They can help other women to realise what they are feeling is normal, because they have gone through it themselves. They can also give them hope that a full recovery is possible.

As well as providing the victims with a listening ear, volunteers accompany people to court and can explain some of the procedures that go...
The low conviction rate represents an injustice for victims.

on there. This is a new service, so there is no evidence yet to show that it works. However, the techniques and methods are similar to those used by advocates working in rape crisis centres.

**Message for donors: provision of services**

The law and society acknowledge rape is a very serious crime and recognise the impact it has on victims. That makes it all the more shocking that there are so few services to help victims deal with the resulting trauma. The rape crisis centres that do exist badly need funding; many of them are small, with few employees, little infrastructure and long waiting lists. They need money both to provide services and to build up capacity. There is a lot of evidence that rape crisis centres are effective and NPC recommends that donors fund them.

Donors may wish to support their local rape crisis centre, and considering the paucity of support across the country, NPC considers that this support would be valuable. When thinking about funding rape crisis centres, donors should look for organisations that are:

- run by women and have women at the heart of their organisation;
- practise person-centred therapy or support;
- provide thorough training to all volunteers;
- have a helpline opened at regular hours, several times a week; and
- measure the improvement on their clients’ health after counselling.

Despite the enormity and the severity of their crimes, sexual abusers are still escaping conviction. This not only represents a lack of justice for their victims, it also places other women at risk. With less than a 6% chance of being sent to prison, there is little to deter men from rape. Charities are working alongside the state to improve the conviction rate by tackling the attitudes of juries, and supporting women through the courts to discourage them from withdrawing complaints.

**Advocacy**

Sexual violence advocates provide support to women going through the legal process. This is important, as victims often feel re-victimised when they report the rape (see Box 13). In addition, many women feel that they are not given enough information about their case and therefore withdraw their complaint. Sexual violence advocates can step in and provide the victim with some of the support and information that they need if they choose to act as witnesses.

Rape Crisis Scotland’s campaign postcard highlights the intimate questions that victims are often asked at trial.
Sexual violence advocates have been used for many years and are very similar to domestic violence advocates. The main difference is that clients of a domestic violence advocate will generally be experiencing ongoing abuse, and therefore need risk planning and management. In contrast, the clients of a sexual violence advocate (who have not experienced abuse by their partner) have generally suffered a one-off attack so the risk of repeat victimisation is far lower.

Around half of rape crisis centres provide advocacy. EVA in Redcar and Cleveland has one advocate. This role started at the end of 2006, and has been in high demand since then.

Who pays?
The Home Office part-funds the salaries of around 40 sexual violence advocates. However, the balance has to be found by the organisation employing the advocate. NPC is not aware that the government will pay for any sexual violence advocate training in 2008. It is up to the charities to fundraise from both local authorities, grant-making trusts and private donors to keep the service running. Other advocates are paid for by charitable trusts and local government.

Campaigning to improve victims’ experiences in court
The trial is often a traumatic time for a victim. She may be asked to describe the attack, which can be like reliving it in front of strangers. If the defence of the assailant is that she consented to the attack, the woman can be asked personal questions. She may face very hostile questions about her sexual history. For instance, if a woman was raped in a car she may be asked if she has ever had sex in a car before. This type of questioning was meant to be outlawed by the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999) in England and Wales and Sexual Offences (Procedure and Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2002. However, there is evidence that these questions are still being allowed. The Scottish Government researched the impact of the 2002 law on evidence and found that, contrary to its intention, more sexual history and character evidence is now being introduced.100

Rape Crisis Scotland is mounting a campaign to stop judges allowing personal questions. It distributes postcards designed to highlight the unfairness of the questions that are being asked. Campaigns like these always find it very hard to assess their impact. However, measures that make the trial easier should lead to fewer women withdrawing their cases.

Public education campaigns to change attitudes of jurors
Public education campaigns were discussed in the previous section on prevention. As well as perhaps changing the attitudes and behaviour of potential perpetrators, these campaigns could also change the attitudes of jurors sitting in rape trials. As long as the public believes the myths about sexual violence, so will jurors who are after all just members of the public. If that is the case, the conviction rate will remain worryingly low.

Message for donors: prosecution and justice
The low conviction rate is an injustice to victims and a danger to other women. One of the major reasons for this low conviction rate is that victims withdraw because they feel unsupported by the system. There are three main approaches to tackling this problem: public education campaigns to tackle myths to inform jurors; lobbying the government to improve the treatment of victims in court; and advocacy for individual victims. All of these are worthy of funding. Changing attitudes and lobbying government are higher risk than working with individuals. Advocacy has been used by many rape crisis centres and SARCs to help individuals for years and there has been plenty of qualitative feedback that this support helps women to pursue prosecutions.
The sexual violence sector has suffered from under-funding for many years. The fact that there is no national helpline is evidence of this. Charities dealing with this issue do not have the same support and capacity that other charities do. Outcome measurement has suffered as a result. This is a sector that has been overlooked for too long, and donors can do much to help, in two priority areas (see Figure 17).

**Public education campaigns**

NPC would like to see donors funding public education campaigns addressing violence against women in general, but in the sexual violence sector it is particularly needed. Research into attitudes shows that people often hold victims responsible for being raped. Making people understand that the responsibility for crimes lies entirely with the perpetrators will hopefully make perpetrators realise that their actions are not acceptable.

*Rape Crisis Scotland’s* public education campaign is a good example of a campaign that is widespread across several media. Each campaign will cost a significant amount of money, but that is needed to reach a large number of people. Changing behaviour is always a long-term endeavour, but prevention work is needed if we are to make an impact in the large number of people who are raped and sexually assaulted every year.

**Rape crisis centres help hundreds of women, at a cost of about £800 per woman.**

**Specialist counselling**

Funding counselling and support represents an opportunity to make a great difference to victims’ lives. There is a body of qualitative evidence built up over decades that shows that victims really value the services of rape crisis centres. Many people have recovered from the trauma of sexual violence thanks to the help these centres can offer. The funding crisis that rape crisis centres have suffered for many years means that private donations can make a big difference, since this is an area with relatively little statutory funding.

Funding a rape crisis centre such as *Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre* is relatively low risk. Most rape crisis centres have pent up demand, so can absorb private funding easily and use it for existing activities. Additionally, there is a great deal of qualitative evidence about the value of rape crisis centres. Donors can fund local rape crisis centres, and if so, should look for organisations that are run by women, that practise person-centred therapy, and that give thorough training to counsellors and support workers. Rape crisis centres help hundreds of women a year, and it costs around £800 to help each woman to start to regain control of her life after being raped.
Violence against black and minority ethnic women

Gurjit Dhaliwal hanged herself after suffering years of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. Too many black and minority ethnic (BME) women like Gurjit choose this route out of violence, because they feel like they do not have any other options. A tacit community collusion to ignore violence against women, together with overt shaming of women who leave their husbands, means that some BME victims get little support from family or friends. Other issues such as language difficulties, not knowing where and how to seek help, and a fear of deportation compound this isolation. BME women may also experience forms of violence that other women in the UK are rarely subjected to, such as ‘honour crimes’, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Some women who do not have indefinite leave to remain in the UK do not even have the safety net that the state offers to people in need. Without this, they get no benefits and no access to state-paid refuge provision: for them the choice is often between living with perpetrators of abuse or living in destitution. Women who are not entitled to benefits live in dreadful circumstances. NPC knows of one woman who managed to get a place in a refuge, living on £15 a week. Other women have been forced to turn to prostitution to pay for food and housing.

**Funding priorities**

Charities that give culturally specific support deserve funding. Such charities provide specialist help to BME women, such as giving support in other languages for women who cannot speak English well enough to talk about complex legal and emotional issues. These charities provide a range of activities such as advice, advocating with other agencies, support groups and counselling. This helps women with many of their practical needs, and helps them feel less isolated.

Charities also need funding so that they can lobby for all women who live in the UK, regardless of their race or nationality, to receive basic rights. Donors who like to campaign for change may find this a rewarding area to support. Funding can also be used to provide services to women who cannot access state-funded services, such as refuges, who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn.

**Key facts**

- Around 3,000 forced marriages take place every year.
- 66,000 women in the UK have been subjected to female genital mutilation.
- Many Asian victims of domestic violence resort to suicide because they see it as the only way out. Rates of suicide and self-harm are 60% higher for young Asian girls than for their white counterparts.
- There are hundreds of people in the UK who are victims of domestic violence, and not entitled to state benefits, making it very hard for them to leave their partners.
- Women with no recourse to public funds, who cannot access state benefits, may be living off as little as £15 a week.

**Victims’ voices**

‘The abuse that was started by my father was carried on by my husband, and has now come full-circle with my son treating me in the same way. But at every point I have been told to keep quiet, that I should not bring dishonour to the family. I want to know why men who abuse aren’t told that they are bringing disrepute and why women have to carry all the burdens.’

‘When I became pregnant, my mother-in-law continued to abuse me and one day she beat me into unconsciousness. When I awoke, I was bleeding and miscarried for two days. Her response was to take painkillers and return to work.’
Hard knock life | Violence against black and minority ethnic women

What violence affects black and minority ethnic women?

BME women who are victims of violence face even more difficulties than other women. In these communities, family violence is a private issue, and BME women who are victims of violence are even more stigmatised. Domestic violence is more stigmatised, and victims who leave their attackers face being disowned by their extended families and communities for dishonouring their families. The threat of being disowned is enough to prevent some women from speaking out.

BME women are also victims of particular forms of domestic violence, including forced marriage, honour crimes, and female genital mutilation (FGM). These are all types of violence against women as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Violence against BME women

The government classifies these types of violence as forms of domestic violence because they are committed by family members.

What are honour crimes?

The term ‘honour crime’ can be used to describe any form of violence against women that is motivated by the notion of honour. This includes physical violence, rape and sexual assault, forced marriage, imprisonment, emotional and financial abuse and murder. Murder in the name of honour is commonly called an ‘honour killing’. Banaz Mahmod was a victim of both forced marriage and honour killing (see Box 17).

What is a forced marriage?

A forced marriage is where one, or both parties, do not freely consent to getting married. Victims are coerced into marriage through physical, mental and/or emotional pressure and force from family members.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage is where the family orchestrates the union, but both parties give their free and full consent.

Forced marriages may be conducted in the UK and may involve two British citizens. However, women are particularly vulnerable when they are taken abroad. They often believe they are going on a family holiday, unaware that their parents have arranged a marriage for them while they are abroad.

What is female genital mutilation?

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is sometimes referred to as female genital cutting or circumcision. It involves injuring and partially or totally removing the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.
FGM can range from injury to the clitoris through to complete removal of the labia and clitoris. In the most extreme form of FGM, the wound may be sewn up, sometimes leaving only a tiny opening, the width of a matchstick, for urination and menstruation.\textsuperscript{107}

FGM is often performed in unhygienic conditions with basic tools and without anaesthetic. It is agonisingly painful; the girl is usually forcefully held down while the mutilation is done.\textsuperscript{107} Some victims are adults but the majority are children. The procedure normally happens overseas, in the family’s country of origin.\textsuperscript{107}

**Is it illegal?**

Along with domestic and sexual violence, there are a range of laws that criminalise these forms of violence in BME communities.

There are no specific laws covering ‘honour crimes’. Instead, honour crimes are prosecuted according to the nature of the crime, for example, coercion, assault or murder, amongst others.

A new law was passed in 2007 to provide protection to victims of forced marriage. Under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act, courts are able to protect victims and potential victims, removing them from a forced marriage situation. Crucially, third parties may apply on behalf of victims who may not be able to apply themselves.\textsuperscript{108} Alongside this, there are many additional laws that deal with the range of offences committed during forced marriage, including assault, kidnapping, harassment, child cruelty and blackmail. UK marriage laws dictate that a marriage is not valid if consent was given under duress.\textsuperscript{103}

It is illegal to perform FGM in the UK or to arrange for FGM to be performed abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal. The maximum penalty for committing or aiding the offence is 14 years’ imprisonment.\textsuperscript{109} Within the UK, child abuse laws also apply when children are involved.

**What is the scale of the problem?**

Honour crimes, forced marriage and FGM are hidden crimes, and are not often reported. It is unclear how many women are affected, as shown in Table 5.

**Who are the women?**

Most cases of forced marriage involving British women are from South Asian families. However, forced marriage also occurs in East Asian, Middle Eastern, European and African communities.\textsuperscript{110}

Most of the women and girls affected by FGM in the UK come from African communities. However, it is also practised by communities from the Middle East, the Romany and in parts of South Asia, such as Malaysia.\textsuperscript{111}

Women who have insecure immigration status, for example, students, asylum seekers, trafficked women, and women who have come to the UK on their spouses’ visas, are particularly vulnerable to violence or its consequences. These women are ineligible for some state benefits and state paid services such as refuges. These women are known as having “no recourse to public funds” (see Box 18). They do not have the safety net of the state to prevent destitution if they leave abusive partners.

**Table 5: Prevalence of harmful traditional practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Estimates of numbers</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honour crimes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Honour crimes are not separated out from other forms of violence in official crime figures, so there is no way of knowing how many there are. According to the British Crime Survey, around 2% of Asian women have experienced family abuse in the past year.\textsuperscript{7}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour killings</td>
<td>12 a year\textsuperscript{15}</td>
<td>This figure is commonly used, but police and social workers say the figure is much higher. Killings are often disguised as an accident or suicide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced marriages</td>
<td>3,000 a year\textsuperscript{15, 14}</td>
<td>The Forced Marriage Unit receives around 300 reports every year. If the reporting rate for forced marriages is similar to that of other forms of violence against women, at 10%, this implies there are around 3,000 cases a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
<td>66,000 women in England and Wales have had FGM\textsuperscript{12} 20,000 girls in England and Wales are at risk of FGM\textsuperscript{12}</td>
<td>This is believed to be an underestimate because of the recent increase in immigration since the last census.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FGM is often performed in unhygienic conditions with basic tools and without anaesthetic.
Box 18: Immigrants and no recourse to public funds

**Why are public funds important for victims of abuse?**

Public funds pay for social housing, refuge accommodation, and welfare benefits, including income support, council tax benefit and child benefit. Victims of abuse usually rely on these safety nets, at least for a short period of time, to escape abuse.

**Which women cannot access public funds?**

People who do not have indefinite leave to remain in the UK do not have recourse to public funds. They may well be in the UK legally, on work visas, student visas or spousal visas. They may also count as being here illegally, having overstayed their visa, or having been trafficked into the UK. Or, perhaps like Indira, their husband has refused to regulate their immigration status (see Box 19).

The government is currently looking at changing the rules on refuges, so that women who successfully apply for indefinite leave to remain can get their refuge costs paid for retrospectively from the time of their application. However, women who are unsuccessful (two thirds of applicants) would still not get any money. It can take around three months for women to get all the information needed for an application for indefinite leave to remain: this time will not be paid for. The government will give more guidance on this proposal later in 2008.

**How many women are affected by this?**

We do not have comprehensive figures on the number of women who have no recourse to public funds and who are also victims of violence. However, we do have some indications that the numbers are in the hundreds. In 2005, Women’s Aid Federation of England surveyed its affiliated refuges: on one date, 177 women with no recourse to public funds were being housed and 54 women were turned away from accommodation. There will be many more women not being housed, but being given other support such as outreach help. A survey in London showed that in 2006/2007, 238 women were being given support by different organisations. Of these only 20% were being housed, the rest only had access to community services. The number of women affected appears to be rising: one local authority says that it has seen a 30% increase in demand for services over the past three years. In addition, the 4,000 victims of trafficking in the UK will also often be women with no recourse to public funds. Many women with no recourse to public funds will also have children.

**Some women are helped by the Domestic Violence Rule**

For one group of people, the government made a concession so that their immigration status does not force them to stay in a violent marriage. Women who came to the UK on a spousal visa are granted the exemption known as the Domestic Violence Rule. Without this concession, women who are here on their husband’s visa require their husband to sponsor their application to stay in the UK within two years of arriving in the UK. The Domestic Violence Rule allows women who leave their marriage due to domestic violence, and who can prove they were subjected to domestic violence, to apply for leave to remain in the UK indefinitely without the sponsorship of their husbands, even if they have not been in the UK for two years.

In principle, therefore, a woman with insecure immigration status can leave a violent relationship without being deported back to her country of origin. In practice, the rule fails many women who are not eligible, or do not know that they are eligible, or have insufficient evidence to prove that they were victims of domestic violence.

**There are tight criteria for the Domestic Violence Rule**

A woman applying for leave to remain under the Domestic Violence Rule must:

- have entered the UK on a valid spouse/partner visa;
- be married to or in a relationship with a UK national or a man who is settled and has indefinite leave to remain;
- make the application before her visa expires, usually before two years; and
- be able to show her marriage broke down due to domestic violence and provide evidence for it.

**Some women are not eligible to apply under the Domestic Violence Rule**

Many women are ineligible under the Domestic Violence Rule: for example, women with limited leave to remain (such as non-EU students and those on work permits), dependants of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants.

Visa ‘overstayers’ are not able to apply to stay in the UK under the Domestic Violence Rule. One of the ways that abusive husbands control their wives is by failing to apply for this indefinite leave to remain within the two-year period (so the women eventually become ‘overstayers’ and therefore illegal immigrants). While the Home Office states that it will consider these applicants sympathetically, many are refused indefinite leave to remain.

**Some women are not aware of the Domestic Violence Rule**

Some BME women, isolated from friends, with limited English and controlling husbands, may not be aware of their rights under the Domestic Violence Rule.
Box 18: Immigrants and no recourse to public funds (continued)

Some women cannot prove they are victims of domestic violence

The difficulty for many of these isolated women is that they might not have disclosed domestic violence to the police, or they might not even have been to a doctor, so might not be able to show evidence to prove they are victims. Fortunately, women also have the option of showing a letter or report from a women’s refuge to support a claim of domestic violence. This is accepted as evidence of domestic violence if provided with one additional report from certain statutory agencies.

If victims do make an application, they have no recourse to public funds while their application is pending. It can take months to have an application under the Domestic Violence Rule approved and still longer if they are refused indefinite leave to remain and have to appeal this decision.

What happens to women with no recourse to public funds?

Some women without access to safe accommodation or welfare benefits remain dependent on their abusive partners and may be prevented from escaping violence and even death.

Some women leave their partners anyway and depend on acquaintances and strangers, which makes them vulnerable to being exploited economically and sexually. NPC heard of one woman, who was taken in by a couple she met at her temple, and then forced to work exhausting hours as a domestic servant for them. Others turn to religious institutions and are often persuaded to reconcile with abusive partners, which can be very dangerous.

Some women cannot just return ‘home’ to their country of origin. If they do, they may be persecuted for being divorced or separated; they may be in danger of honour crimes from their husband’s families; and may even have to leave their children behind in the UK with violent fathers. For these women, returning ‘home’ may not be an option, and some of them must fight to be allowed to stay in the UK.

Victims face destitution

Even the women who are legally able to work may not be able to because of language issues, children, health problems and trauma. Consequently, some women become destitute. One charity told NPC that women with no recourse and no skills to work have been forced to turn to prostitution to get enough money to eat.

Even the Home Office admits that these women are potentially impoverished. In its Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme Resource Manual, issued in 2006, the Home Office states:

‘Women with immigration problems may have no recourse to public funds, which means they need help from the local authority, women’s refuges and domestic violence support organisations to seek protection from domestic violence and avoid homelessness and destitution.’

The Home Office has not provided clear guidance to local authorities on when to disregard immigration controls on using public funds. Local authorities are caught: if they help these women, they may be acting illegally, because the women do not have a right to public funding. But if they do not help, they may be denying someone her human rights. Central government does not provide local authorities with any funding to support these women, so there is little money for any provision they do give. There are numerous reports of local authorities threatening to take children into care rather than offer any support to the mother.

In the absence of benefits, some local authorities pay a subsistence allowance. This differs between regions: some local authorities only pay subsistence to the children; some do not pay anything. Subsistence rates are usually around £30 a week. Out of this, women have to pay for clothes for themselves and their children, travel and food amongst everything else. One charity told NPC that it had to give women food, and teach them how to cook with very little food so that they could survive on this level of money. Refuges often rely on donations of nappies, clothes and food to help women with no recourse to public funds.

‘People in this situation may suffer inhumane and degrading treatment. This is the unacceptable impact of a government policy that seeks to place the onus on people to leave the UK on a voluntary basis and to use destitution to encourage people to leave.’

Other countries face similar issues balancing immigration laws with human rights. There are examples of best practice. In the US, all immigrants (including illegal immigrants) qualify for federally funded emergency shelter and housing programmes, as well as other forms of state and federally funded assistance necessary to ‘protect life and safety’. Canada, Denmark and Austria also have safeguards to ensure that victims of violence are not discriminated against because of their immigration status.

The recent government proposal to retrospectively pay refuge costs for women who are granted indefinite leave to remain is an important step in providing for these women. However, it will still leave refugees having to pick up the bill for those women who do not receive indefinite leave to remain. It may also create the unintended consequence that refugees will be more likely to help those women who have a good chance of getting indefinite leave to remain.

Message to donors

Victims of violence with no recourse to public funds face a bleak, and potentially fatal, prospect: the choice between life with a violent partner, or leaving the marriage but then facing poverty and homelessness, perhaps having their children taken into care, and possibly being deported back to their country of origin. These women are often some of the most victimised and traumatised women and they badly need services. NPC recommends prioritising help for these women.
One refuge provider told NPC it had a woman staying who was living on only £15 a week.

Box 19: Indira is in danger because she has no recourse to public funds

Indira came in to the UK on a student visa seven years ago. She met her partner, a UK citizen, and they had a brief relationship before marrying. She has been living with him since and they have a five-year-old child. Indira is classed as an illegal immigrant as her husband has refused to register her immigration status as his spouse.

Her husband is extremely physically violent, both in public and private. He has made threats to her life. The police have been involved after numerous incidents, but Indira has never prosecuted him. Indira is supported by an outreach worker, Lucy, from a local domestic violence charity. Lucy feels Indira is at real risk of being murdered by her husband and that her child’s life is also at risk.

Indira went to the local authority to ask them how they could help her to leave her husband. Their response was that they would not support her. Without any other means of support, Indira has ended up staying in this extremely dangerous relationship.

Her outreach worker, Lucy, is staying in touch and trying to identify other possible avenues for protection and support for both Indira and her daughter. Chillingly Lucy said, ‘We are just waiting for the phone to ring to tell us she’s been killed.’

Who are the perpetrators?

Unlike perpetrators of domestic violence in the mainstream white population, who tend to be intimate partners, perpetrators in BME communities may also include family and/or community members.

What are the causes and consequences?

Causes and consequences of honour crimes and forced marriage

As in other communities, control over women is a common motivating factor for perpetrators of violence in BME communities. Religious and cultural practices are also used to ‘justify’ this violence, particularly the notion of ‘honour’.

Triggers of honour crimes, including forced marriage, often involve women exercising their own free will: deciding who to date or marry, wanting a divorce, being suspected of having sex outside of marriage, and sometimes just leaving the house alone (which places them under suspicion of the above activities). Sometimes, appearing too ‘western’, wearing red lipstick or receiving a text on a mobile phone from a member of the opposite sex can place young women at risk of honour killings.

Additional reasons for forced marriages include: retaining wealth or property in the family; preventing unsuitable marriages (eg, outside of caste or religion); citizenship; and historical family commitments.

The impact of violence on BME women may be worse than for other women. For BME victims there are additional barriers to leaving their partners or family, reporting violence and seeking help. These include religious and cultural pressures, shaming their family and their community; language difficulties, lack of knowledge of services and their rights, reluctance by agencies to intervene in case they are seen as ‘culturally insensitive’ and some victims’ fear of deportation. BME women therefore take even longer than the majority to leave domestic violence situations, and the consequences are more severe.

‘I felt so trapped I couldn’t breathe. That’s the whole idea with forced marriages: keep the girls in a place from which they cannot escape.’

Victim of forced marriage

Some BME women suffer from the following:

- **Isolation.** Women feel isolated in a violent marriage, particularly because they often cannot turn to family or friends for support. The isolation can be exacerbated if the victim leaves the relationship, because these same family and friends may cut her out of their lives and leave her to fend for herself.

- **Mental ill-health and suicide.** Many Asian women will resort to self-harm and suicide rather than leave a violent home and face the consequences of living alone, without social or financial support. Those who do leave are haunted by the guilt of bringing ‘shame’ upon their family. In 2005, rates of suicide and self-harm were 60% higher for young Asian girls than the average for their white counterparts.

- **Further violence and murder.** Some women are forced to flee their marriage in secrecy, for fear of their family finding them and returning them to the marriage, or subjecting them to honour crimes, including murder. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has seen cases of families searching for victims who have left their forced marriage, using bounty hunters and members of the community and even the police (accusing the woman of a crime in order to get the police to find her).
To this day I cry when I remember all the things that were done to me. My memories are not a comfort to me, a place to retreat to; they are a curse.”

Victim of forced marriage.

Causes and consequences of FGM

FGM is a very old practice. There are many reasons used to justify FGM including: 

- custom and tradition;
- religion, although it is a mistaken belief that it is a religious requirement;
- preservation of virginity/chastity for marriage, which is linked closely to family honour;
- enhancing female worth;
- hygiene and cleanliness;
- aesthetics; and
- a sense of belonging to the community and, conversely, the fear of social exclusion.

The social consequences of not having had FGM are dire for some women. For example, Somalian women who marry and have not had FGM face immediate divorce or are forced to undergo mutilation. One youth worker in the Somali community in London, Leyla Hussein, said attitudes about FGM were so ingrained that some young women want to be circumcised. “You want to be part of the community. You want to be married, and you don’t want to be considered dirty.”

FGM is often carried out in unhygienic conditions with the most basic tools and without anaesthetic, with terrible physical and mental health consequences.

- The short-term impact can be horrific, including extreme pain and bleeding; shock; anaemia; infections, including HIV; tetanus; difficulty urinating (because the hole left for urination is too small) and fatal haemorrhaging.
- FGM may also have tragic long-term consequences: cysts; infections; difficulty menstruating; damage to reproductive systems; infertility; sexual dysfunction; and problems during pregnancy and childbirth, including stillbirth and obstetric fistula (a childbirth injury that leaves women incontinent and sometimes isolated and ashamed).
- FGM can be fatal. In a highly publicised recent example in Egypt, a 12-year-old girl died undergoing FGM in 2007.
- Evidence of the psychological effects of FGM is appearing in migrant communities in Europe, America and Australasia. For example, female students subjected to FGM experience higher absenteeism, poor concentration, low academic performance and loss of interest.

‘I remember the painful, harmful and deadly moments and I cried and screamed but could not escape. The scars, the pain and the health problems I suffered are still with me today and will never go away.’

Victim of FGM

What is the cost?

Many of the costs of violence against BME women are the same as those for domestic and sexual violence in the mainstream white community. NPC has therefore estimated the cost of violence against BME women as £1.5bn every year (see Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women). However, this does not include the costs of FGM, the costs of forced marriage, or the added costs of translation, which we do not have any estimates for. Therefore this is likely to be a low estimate.
How is government tackling it?

Government and agencies should be sensitive to the cultural pressures on BME victims and make sure there are appropriate services in place to help them. The following sections discuss what the government is doing to tackle these problems and the progress it has made, as well as criticisms of the government’s actions.

Both central and local government have a role in tackling these abuses, and in providing services for victims.

Government progress

The government has made significant progress on domestic violence generally in recent years. In addition, some measures specifically benefit victims in minority communities. It is currently drawing up a strategy for honour-based violence (honour crimes).

Forced marriage

The government takes forced marriage seriously. There is a Forced Marriage strategy, which was published in 2007. This aims to help prevent forced marriages; improve agencies’ knowledge of how to help; and increase prosecutions. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Home Office have a joint Forced Marriage Unit (FMU), which was set up in 2000. The FMU is a single point of confidential advice and assistance for people settled in the UK at risk of being forced into marriage overseas. The unit sees around 250–300 cases of forced marriage each year. It provides a range of services to those who fear they may be forced into marriage, and to those who have already been married against their will, including:

- awareness-raising;
- advice;
- international assistance if individuals do go missing;
- visa denial for overseas spouses;
- survivor support; and
- training and guidance for professionals.

Female Genital Mutilation

Some statutory bodies have been taking FGM more seriously in recent years. The Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Command runs summer campaigns against FGM. In July 2007, they launched Project Azure, an awareness campaign about FGM. The campaign was launched in July because the police believe the summer holiday is the most common time for FGM to be carried out, because girls have a long period over which to physically recover from the procedure. There are no police authorities outside London that are actively targeting FGM.

For women who have already endured FGM, a key priority is healthcare, particularly during pregnancy. Specialist FGM nurses and midwives do exist, but they are few and far between. There are 13 African Well Women Clinics across the UK, which specialise in FGM.

Criticisms of the government’s response

Lack of awareness of the issues

Very few statutory bodies have an understanding of culturally specific forms of violence against women in BME communities, or provisions to deal with cases. Many do not have policies on issues such as forced marriage, and even if they do, are not always aware of it. No one has ever been convicted under the FGM legislation, and this may be a result of the low level of awareness, as well as the hidden nature of the crime.

According to NPC’s consultations, there is a particularly low level of knowledge about FGM amongst key statutory agencies as a result of a lack of training (see Box 20). Issues regarding FGM are not part of the core training curriculum for nurses, social workers or teachers. These professionals are not able to easily identify cases and, if they do, many do not know how to help.

Lack of intervention for fear of being racist

NPC does not subscribe to the culturally relative view that communities should be allowed to police their own traditional practices if those practices violate human rights. The government agrees: ‘…multicultural sensitivity is no excuse for official silence or moral blindness’. However, some agencies have had difficulty in dealing with harmful traditional practices, not knowing how to walk the line between being culturally sensitive and protecting women’s human rights.

Clinics across the UK, which specialise in FGM. Some agencies have had difficulty in dealing with violence against BME women, not knowing how to walk the line between being culturally sensitive and protecting women’s human rights.
categorically refined when dealing with victims, but racially and ethnically blind when dealing with perpetrators”. The charity Southall Black Sisters reports that the guidance has not filtered down to ‘rank and file’ level. In practice there has often been little change.

**Limited attention paid to forced marriages occurring in the UK**

There has been criticism that government initiatives deal with marriages that occur overseas and ignore forced marriages that occur in the UK between British citizens.

Another concern is that the government’s focus encourages a view that all marriages with an overseas spouse are suspect. The use of immigration controls, for example, the 2006 Home Office proposal to raise the minimum age of an overseas partner to come to the UK from 18 to 24 to address forced marriage, have concerned some practitioners. This also effectively sets a minimum marriage age for anyone seeking an overseas partner.

**How are charities tackling it?**

BME victims have the same avenues of support and services that were discussed previously, in the domestic and sexual violence chapters of this report. However, BME women often prefer to turn to women’s organisations that understand the cultural pressures that they may be under, and can speak their language. For example, the Forced Marriage Unit deals with 300 cases of forced marriage every year, but a recent study in Luton showed that a community organisation there was aware of 300 cases in Luton alone. This shows that many BME women are happier going to a community organisation than a mainstream statutory service. Awareness-raising and educational campaigns are better received coming from the people who are from the community, rather than from white, middle-class men.

Some specialist charities deal with single types of violence against women such as honour crimes, but, because victims often face multiple types of abuse, charities often tackle all forms of violence against BME women together, in the context of domestic violence, or the wider issue of violence against women.

Charities working to tackle violence against BME women work in the following areas:

- raising awareness of the issues and changing attitudes in their community towards women;
- campaigning for policy and legal changes;
- providing refuge accommodation to women who leave their abuser, at significant cost when supporting women without recourse to public funds;
- providing training to agencies, such as the police and nurses.

**Box 20: Trying to get in touch with the Metropolitan Police’s FGM incident room**

While conducting research for this report, NPC attempted to get in touch with the Metropolitan Police’s FGM team, to ask for some information. Our investigations revealed that there is widespread ignorance about FGM within the Met, the police force that is widely reputed to have the best practice to tackle FGM in the country.

There is a number for an FGM incident room on the internet, but NPC did not manage to find anyone on the other end of the phone there. The person on duty at the Metropolitan Police switchboard did not know what FGM was, so it is little surprise that they could not then direct us to a member of staff who could help. The switchboard suggested five other officers who might help, but none answered the phone. Eventually someone at a local rape team was able to tell us who the Metropolitan Police’s expert in FGM was, but the expert was away for two weeks. The expert’s colleague, who worked in the child abuse team, told us that there was nobody else who could assist, and that she herself only had two hours training on FGM.

This illustrates that, in a city where there are many girls at risk of undergoing this harmful practice, there is no coordinated strategy on how to deal with it, and few police officers aware of the issue.

- advocating on behalf of individual women and helping them to access other services (welfare benefits, accommodation, counselling) and to improve their knowledge and gain new skills;
- in-depth asylum and immigration casework;
- providing counselling to women who are traumatised by their experiences;
- providing support groups that can help women over the long term, helping them to overcome low self-esteem and isolation; and
- providing training to agencies, such as the police and nurses.

NPC found charities dealing with violence that had already happened, but fewer charities that had the capacity to tackle the causes of violence against BME women. Changing the attitudes of children, the community and community leaders is the first step to preventing these abuses. In addition to the activities talked about below, donors should also remember that the preventative work in schools, discussed in the domestic violence chapter, will also help tackle attitudes to violence in the BME community.
Forced marriages and honour crimes are very ingrained in some communities. Reducing the prevalence of these abuses relies on changing attitudes.

One in ten young British Asians believes honour killings can be justified.115

Changing attitudes

Violence against women is very ingrained in some communities. Reducing the prevalence of these abuses relies on changing attitudes.

Through educating people that honour crimes, forced marriage, FGM and domestic violence are abuses of human rights, charities hope to get people to change their behaviour.

‘There has to be “a shift of power within the families and communities practiseing arranged marriage, so that young people refusing a marriage partner no longer face an unbearable weight of parental disapproval, and families are no longer shamed within their communities if their young people continue to refuse”.’127

Work with young people is important to change the attitudes of the next generation. The London charity Ashiana has a preventative education and advice programme in east London schools, aimed at 11–16 year olds. The project raises awareness of domestic violence, to help prevent abuse and encourage early intervention.

FORWARD, an FGM charity based in London, is trying to create a network of young ambassadors to change attitudes and create social change. They are seeking young Africans (men and women) between the ages of 16 and 25 to become peer educators and campaigners against violence against women, particularly FGM and forced marriage.

There have been some notable examples of success in community work abroad. Tostan is a charity that works in Africa. It educates women on human rights and their rights to health and to be free from violence. These women then raise awareness in their community about how FGM infringes human rights. This respectful approach has had good results. Since 1997, over 2,500 villages in Senegal, Guinea and Burkina Faso have publicly declared that they are abandoning FGM. Although there are some differences between the approaches used in the UK and abroad, Tostan’s work shows us that this intervention can be successful.

Message for donors: prevention

Logically, prevention is better than cure. Therefore, changing attitudes through grass roots community work is very appealing. Donors who fund prevention programmes should look for activities that are sustained for several years. There have not been many evaluations to examine this work over the long term and donors should also look to fund evaluations to accompany any prevention work.

Women from BME communities can and do access mainstream services. However, many BME women prefer more culturally-specific services that understand both the trauma, and the cultural pressures experienced by some BME victims. However, services for BME women are few and far between.1 Nine out of ten local authorities have no specialist services for BME women. Those that do exist are mainly domestic violence services.

There has been a trend in recent years towards mainstream services and away from services that specialise in provision for BME victims. Imkaan, a national charity dedicated to improving Asian women’s refuges, says that the statutory programme, Supporting People, one of the main funding streams for refuges, is increasingly questioning the need for specialist BME refuges and not funding such specialist services.136 Unless this changes, specialist BME services will become even rarer.

Safe housing

Refuges are a necessary part of any solution to domestic violence. They are essential for women whose partners or family are so violent that they fear for their lives. Refuges generally provide more than just accommodation, also giving support, help to move on, and sometimes counselling (see the domestic violence chapter for more detail about refuges and other housing options, including a discussion of their effectiveness).

Refuge bed spaces are normally paid from Housing Benefit. However, this is not the case for women who have no recourse to public funds. Charities therefore have to use their own funds to provide accommodation for these women. This costs refuges dearly and has been the cause of some charities’ account deficits in recent years. It costs around £10,000 to house a woman for one year.52 On top of this, refuges may give the victims subsistence money. Helping women without recourse to public funds places refuges in a precarious financial position. As well as the money they have to find to pay for the costs of housing women, charities are often penalised by their funders if they run into serious deficit.39 Provision for women with no recourse is the most frequently cited ‘unmet need’ by refuges.39
Some refuges provide specialist services to BME women. **Ashiana**, in London, for instance, runs a refuge that specialises in providing accommodation to women and girls fleeing forced marriages. This is an eight bed refuge for women aged between 16 and 25. At the refuge, women receive legal, financial and personal advice and support to allow them to go on to live independently.

**Panah**, a small refuge in Newcastle, is a refuge for BME women experiencing domestic violence. It provides much-needed services for BME women, and management understand the problems of these women well.

**Advice and advocacy**
Charities provide emergency crisis advice, longer term practical support and in-depth casework to victims. For BME women who may not speak English well enough to talk about complex legal and emotional issues, specialist help in their own language is invaluable.

“...I was able to speak in my mother tongue and express myself to my caseworker who had knowledge and understanding of my issue.”

Client of an advice charity

**Multiple-language telephone helplines**
**Aanchal**, a small charity in east London, runs the only 24-hour helpline for Asian victims of domestic violence. This service runs in eight languages and is an important source of advice and support for women who do not speak English. The helpline offers immediate crisis help for women who need to leave their house urgently and go to a refuge. It also provides women with practical advice to help them rebuild their lives after escaping from violence. Aanchal receives around 8,000 calls each year.

**Practical support and advice**
There are many charities that provide practical advice to women experiencing domestic violence across the country. However, many BME women need specialist advice, due to complex issues such as language barriers, immigration problems, destitution, forced marriage and honour crimes. For some BME women, the risk of violence can be heightened due to the collusion of the extended family and even the wider community. Charities provide this specialist expertise that is often not available elsewhere.

**Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO)**, a small charity in London, gives advice to women from Arab communities who are experiencing violence. Its focus is on honour crimes. IKWRO is almost entirely run by volunteers. It gives advice on benefits, employment and training, childcare and housing. Many of its clients are women with no recourse to public funds, but there is little it can do to help these women with housing and IKWRO often relies on volunteers in the community to house them.

**Advocacy and legal advice**
Victims of domestic violence need support from many different local agencies, including housing, social services, counselling, children’s services, legal assistance and courts. Advocates help each woman to access all the services she needs to keep safe, and provide her with a single point of contact. Numerous evaluations have shown that advocacy is very effective at making victims safe, as discussed in the domestic violence chapter. It is also cheaper than many of the alternatives available to victims of domestic violence.
Many BME women do not like to use mainstream mental health services, which lack knowledge of domestic and sexual violence and the needs of the BME community.

BME victims of domestic violence often need legal advice, especially if they have no recourse to public funds. Charities have specialist knowledge and can help them with immigration issues.

Southall Black Sisters (SBS), based in Ealing, is a unique service with specialist knowledge about the law and domestic violence. Much of SBS’s work is focused on legal matters for its clients. This occurs across a wide range of subjects including inquests, divorces and getting indefinite leave to remain. SBS gives expert testimonies in court to help women to highlight the specific social, cultural and religious pressures that Asian and BME women experience. It also has particular expertise with immigration issues. It costs SBS on average around £200 to deal with each client.

SBS estimates that it has had a 74% success rate for its casework (11% were pending an outcome, 12% had an unknown outcome, and 3% were unsuccessful). Each ‘success’ is quite significant in terms of improving the woman’s safety. For example, preventing her from being deported, finding her permanent housing, and getting her a divorce. In terms of immigration cases, SBS has won all of its cases in the past 20 years (averaging around 5–7 cases per year). Its success rate of 100% compares favourably with the national rate of success for asylum claims, which is just 33%.124,125

Imkaan, a national charity dedicated to improving the Asian women’s refuge sector, is developing a database of legal professionals with expertise in providing legal assistance to Asian women. This database will be a great resource for Asian women’s refuges.

‘I have learnt to value myself for who I am. With advice, patience and true support I have come to understand that I can build a successful life.’101

Client of an advocacy charity

Counselling

Counselling helps to give women the emotional stability they need to deal with abuse. However, counselling for domestic violence is quite hard to find. Additionally, there are often long waiting lists for statutory services (between six and nine months).64 Many BME women do not like to use mainstream mental health services, which lack knowledge of domestic and sexual violence and the needs of the BME community. There is consequently a massive unmet demand for voluntary service counselling. Due to limited funding, counselling is not offered in the majority of refuges.

Newham Asian Women’s Project in east London runs a host of services for Asian women, including counselling. It is available to women aged between 12 and 55 in Newham and sees around 150 women a year. Around 20% of these use the charity because they are victims of domestic violence. Women can have between ten to 20 sessions of counselling, which is available in six languages.

Counselling has been shown to be effective at helping victims to cope with the impact of abuse (for an example of how Aanchal helped Gita, see Box 21). One charity found that 80% of people who accessed its counselling found that it helped them deal with their problems.136

‘The counsellor understands my cultural and religious background and so there is less room for misinterpretation or lack of understanding than other counsellors who are not from the same background. I did go to my GP, but I had to wait too long to see a psychiatrist. But I was feeling very depressed and wanted some help and so I started to talk and found that I kept on talking to the SBS counsellor. I was on antidepressants, but I found that talking helped. I did not like the drugs because they made me sleepy and caused pain in my muscles, but now I am no longer on medication. The counselling and support at SBS has helped me to recover, although I still worry about my asylum problem and the future.’134

Client of Southall Black Sisters

Support groups

Support groups are especially beneficial for women from BME communities who can often find themselves isolated if they leave their families. Having women from their community who understand and support them helps to combat that isolation.

‘As soon as we relaxed to some extent we realised that we were quite similar to one another. And we started to become friends. The other girls were really quite inspiring. They all helped one another and they all boosted each other’s self-esteem.’101

Member of a support group.

Aanchal runs weekly support groups that bring together women so that they can benefit from each others’ experiences, build skills to learn to live independently, and make friendships to reduce isolation. They hold discussions on debt, education and child contact, run workshops on CVs, and do cooking and sewing activities. Transport is provided for the older women and the young girls, to ensure that they can get to the groups.
Aanchal captures anecdotal feedback from the women who attend a support group. One anecdote that stands out is a comment made by one elderly lady who visited a restaurant for the first time when she was with her support group. While her husband had been alive, he had rarely let her leave the house. She was so elated at having been allowed to experience a restaurant (an act that her husband would have believed was tantamount to prostitution) that she told one of the staff: ‘When I go to heaven, I’ll tell God I have been to a restaurant’.

Box 21: How Aanchal helped Gita

Gita’s marriage was arranged: she was not allowed to ask any questions about her future husband. Not who he was or where he lived. She came over from India to England for her marriage and once here, she was entirely at the mercy of her husband’s family. Gita was not allowed to have any identity of her own. Gita was physically abused by her husband, her mother-in-law and her two sisters-in-law. They placed hot ladles on her arms, put scissors up to her face and threatened to stab her. They strangled her several times. They kicked her, punched her and pinched her. Gita was constantly covered in bruises. Every Monday morning Gita’s mother-in-law would spit on her face and call her a prostitute. Despite the fact that she is a vegetarian, they forced her to eat meat. Gita’s children were also hit by her husband and her in-laws.

Gita was alone in the country with no support from her family. One of her sisters-in-law worked in Victim Support and told her that she had the government in her pocket and they would do nothing to help Gita. Gita believed her and thought that there was no way out of the abuse. Gita was completely isolated. She did not know how to get on a bus, how to go places, and she was too afraid to talk to people and ask for help.

One day her doctor gave her the number of Aanchal, which helped her leave her husband and the abuse behind. With the charity’s help she became more independent and was able to do the tasks that so many of us take for granted, like apply for benefits. She also received counselling to help her cope with the trauma, and now she is able to talk to others about her experiences. Today, she and her children live a life free from violence.
Message for donors: provision of services

NPC believes that specialist services for BME women are very important. These services are better attuned to the cultural pressures that often affect victims of violence in the BME community. They can give more information about the legal issues around immigration than mainstream services are willing to provide. Services such as advocacy and counselling are very important and have evidence of good results.

NPC prioritises services for women with no recourse to public funds, as the need of these women is so great. Supporting both campaigns to get the government to increase support as well as supporting actual service provision are both priorities for funding.

Prosecution is a vital part of ensuring justice for women and deterring other offenders. It sends the message to perpetrators that society does not condone their actions.

Lobbying government to improve legislation and law enforcement

Charities have helped the government frame laws in ways that protect the human rights of victims and give them justice. For example, Southall Black Sisters has played a major role in changing the laws on immigration, domestic violence and forced marriage, and has influenced numerous policy changes. The charity is extensively quoted and credited for its policy and campaigning work. One of its recent successes was lobbying against criminalising forced marriage, because it feared women would not report their parents if there was a chance they would go to jail. Instead it argued for civil penalties for forced marriage. Lord Lester quoted Southall Black Sisters in the House of Lords with regard to the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Bill.

‘Last summer the Government decided against making forced marriage a crime. The Southall Black Sisters was among many well informed organisations opposing such an extension of the criminal law. It argued that a new criminal offence would add little to the existing body of law on murder, kidnapping and offences against the person; that police intervention would be counter-productive; and that it would be difficult to obtain sufficient evidence to satisfy the criminal burden of proof beyond reasonable doubt.’

Charities also help the government to draw up guidelines to protect women. Karma Nirvana, a small charity in Derby, is currently working with the government on its response to victims of forced marriage. It also works with the government and other organisations to raise awareness of forced marriage and honour crimes. All of its staff are survivors of honour crimes, and so are especially suited to helping victims.

In the case of FGM, FORWARD, along with other charities, lobbied for the 1985 Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act, which made FGM illegal in the UK. It also lobbied for the subsequent Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which made it illegal for FGM to be arranged to occur outside the UK.139

Changing the law helps define what is considered acceptable behaviour and therefore acts as a catalyst to change cultural norms.

Advocacy support through the courts

Advocates (described in more detail above) can support victims through the court process, which increases the chance of a successful prosecution. Many BME organisations, such as Southall Black Sisters, provide such support to victims.

Message for donors: prosecution and justice

Prosecution is a vital part of helping victims and should not be neglected. There are two main activities in this space: lobbying and advocacy.

Lobbying government helps to ensure laws are introduced that benefit a great number of women, but the outcome depends on the attitude of government and it is quite risky.

Advocacy has a better hit rate in terms of the number of successes, but each advocate only helps around 80 women a year. NPC believes advocacy is a higher priority for funding, particularly as they help women with many needs.

Summary for donors

BME victims of violence against women are some of the most marginalised women in our society. Having been abused by their husbands, they can often face abuse from their community and family if they try to seek help. Funding is needed to make them less isolated, so that they
are not in such a bleak situation. There are few organisations dedicated to dealing with violence against BME women. Those that do exist are increasingly under strain from government funders wanting to mainstream services and from the deficits left from providing for women with no recourse to public funds. This is an often overlooked sector, and donors who wish to fund small organisations doing great work under stretching circumstances should think about funding charities tackling violence against BME women. Funding priorities are shown in Figure 19.

Helping women without the safety net of public funds

Victims of domestic violence who do not have recourse to public funds do not have any safety net to fall back on. This leaves many women in danger. Women in this situation are currently without any voice and so private funding is needed so that charities can lobby the government on their behalf. Without this, hundreds of women will continue to be left unsupported. Lobbying is a high-risk activity, as its results depend on the priorities of the government. However, the advantage of lobbying is that, if successful, it changes the prospects for hundreds of women a year, and means that in future this provision will be paid for by the government. Campaigning has a huge impact, and the benefits of funding this kind of work will be felt by women for many years to come. Donors could fund charities such as Southall Black Sisters, which are lobbying the government on this issue. Donors should fund charities that have a strong track record in campaigning and lobbying work and that have good ties with government.

Until there is a change in the law, private funding is needed so that women are not trapped into staying with an abuser. It costs roughly £10,000 to provide a bed space for one woman with no recourse to public funds for a year. The logic behind funding these bed spaces is powerful: for many women and their children it is the only hope of escaping an abuser. Donors will make a huge impact on one woman’s life, possibly even saving it, but will not be able to help many women with their money. Donors can fund charities such as Refuge, which have beds available for women with no recourse to public funds.
Hard knock life | Violence against black and minority ethnic women

Figure 19: Funding priorities for tackling violence against BME women

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Culturally specific support

Women who want to leave an abuser have to piece together the help they need from many different agencies, such as police, housing, courts and health services. BME women can be even more isolated by cultural pressures, and therefore have less avenues of support to turn to. They may also have specific problems such as language barriers, immigration problems and isolation from friends. One woman who could not speak English was so isolated that she used to go to the park to get strangers to read her sensitive official letters, until she found a domestic violence charity that could help her.

Services that understand all the pressures on BME women and help them in many ways are necessary to allow women to escape. Charities such as Aanchal help women in a number of ways—providing advice on the telephone helpline, providing in-depth advocacy that addresses a number of problems, providing counselling and providing support groups. Having a one-stop shop is ideal for women who are more isolated and therefore do not know how to access many different types of support. Advocacy is a particularly important strand of this, as it provides in-depth help to lots of different problems. Charities that operate this one-stop shop approach are very effective in helping women. Aanchal reported that 98% of people felt better able to cope with the impact of violence, and 61% became more self-sufficient.

Services for BME women often cost more than mainstream services, because of the need for interpreting costs, and very involved casework if women have immigration issues. These are vital services, which are needed and worth the cost.

It costs roughly £10,000 to house a woman with no recourse to public funds for a year. The logic behind funding these bed spaces is powerful: for many women and their children it is the only hope of escaping an abuser.
Violence against women in prostitution

When five women were murdered in Ipswich by Steve Wright, the UK suddenly paid attention to the lives of women involved in street prostitution. Especially shocking was that, even after the first few murders, some women were so deep in a spiral of substance abuse, homelessness, ill-health and violence that they were prepared to risk ‘going with’ a serial murderer.

Women in street prostitution are some of the most disadvantaged people in society. Problems experienced earlier on in life (such as an unsettled family life, time spent in care, domestic violence, child abuse, disrupted schooling or drug use) may push them into prostitution when they are still children. Once there, the downward spiral becomes even harder to escape. Street prostitution is characterised by intense violence, so many women turn to drugs as a coping mechanism. This, along with criminal records, homelessness and mental health problems, stops them from getting a job and escaping the violence that goes hand in hand with selling sex on the streets. The overwhelming majority of women involved in prostitution want to leave this life behind, but they find it incredibly difficult to do so on their own.

Funding priorities

Donors can fund charities that help prevent sexually exploited girls from becoming involved in adult prostitution. Other charities focus on tackling the demand for prostitution, using public education campaigns to raise awareness about the realities of prostitution.

Charities that help women to exit prostitution and leave the violence behind them also deserve funding. They do this by helping women to overcome other issues, such as substance misuse and homelessness, which may be trapping them in prostitution.

Key facts

- There are more than 80,000 women in prostitution in the UK.
- 63% of women in prostitution have experienced client violence, and one in five women in street prostitution has been raped.
- Women in prostitution are 18 times more likely to be murdered than the general population.
- Two thirds of women in prostitution started before they were 16.
- Up to 95% of women in street prostitution are believed to be on crack cocaine or heroin, and two thirds of women suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.
- In a nine country study, 89% of women said they wanted to leave prostitution.

Victims’ voices

‘I was 18 when I met him, and he was just telling me to start with the drugs, the heroin, have a little bit, and then I formed a heroin habit, and he said to me you’ve got to start making money. So he put me on the beat ... every single day I was out on the beat, earning money for his crack, his heroin and my heroin. That’s how it started, but he got violent.’

‘On the streets I’ve been robbed, battered, raped—I never knew whether this was the last car I would ever get into, and my parents would get that phone call. Once I had a gun waved in my face.’
What is prostitution?

Defining prostitution

Prostitution is a sexual act undertaken in exchange for some form of payment (money, drugs, food, accommodation etc). Two types of prostitution are discussed in this report:

- off-street prostitution (women selling sex in brothels, saunas, massage parlours, escort agencies, private flats and other premises); and
- street prostitution (outdoor prostitution, usually on the streets).

Since 2000, children and young people under 18 involved in prostitution fall within the child protection framework. They are now formally referred to as sexually exploited young people or young people abused through prostitution. NPC’s report, Not seen and not heard, covers this group of children in more detail, in the context of child abuse.

Legality

Prostitution in itself is not illegal in the UK. However, many of the activities surrounding it are criminal offences.

There are more than 30 separate offences related to prostitution, including soliciting on the street, kerb crawling and placing advertising cards in telephone boxes (“carding”). More serious offences include keeping or owning a brothel and “pimping”, because they involve control over women in prostitution for material gain. A property (massage parlour, private flat, sauna) becomes a brothel if more than one individual is using it for the purpose of prostitution.

Buying sex from anyone under the age of 18 is child sexual abuse. Those who do so face extremely serious criminal charges and will be liable for registration on the child sex offenders register.

Is it violent?

Prevalence of violence

Like Tracy (see Box 22), most women involved in prostitution are highly vulnerable and are at a greater risk of violence than other women. A number of studies record the high level of violence experienced by women involved in prostitution. The Economic and Social Research Council funded a UK-wide study, which surveyed 240 women in prostitution in Glasgow, Leeds and Edinburgh and found that:

- 63% reported experience of client* violence over their lifetime;
- 37% had experienced a client attack in the last six months;
- 47% of women in street prostitution reported being kicked or punched; 28% reported attempted rape;
- 17% of women in off-street prostitution reported attempted rape; and
- 22% of the women in street prostitution in Leeds and Glasgow had been raped.

Another study in Chicago found that 50% of women working as ‘escorts’ reported having been raped by clients.

‘I decided to leave prostitution when I got attacked by a punter. He raped me, he buggered me. Every pain that any man had ever done to me all my life had been done to me in one night by him. He took away every little confidence that I could ever possibly ever have. He gave me a disease, he ruined me, he poisoned my insides, he almost prevented me from having children.’

Charlotte

For many women, the violence they experience whilst working in prostitution is an extension of violence they have experienced before—for example, many have been the victims of child abuse and an increasing number have been trafficked into prostitution.

Off-street versus street prostitution

Women selling sex on the streets are often more at risk of violence than those working off the streets in brothels. Trafficked women are the exception and they are the focus of the next

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* The terms ‘client’ and ‘punter’ are used interchangeably in this report and refer to men who buy sex.
chapter. The illicit nature of street prostitution means that the women tend to work alone and sell sex in dark, isolated places. This increases their vulnerability and makes it easier for clients/punters to impose violence. Off-street women have the benefit of knowing their environment, and they are often in the company of other women, managers or maids, who can monitor client activity.10

Due to practical constraints NPC has focused its attention on charities that are working with women involved in street prostitution, and women trafficked into sexual exploitation (for more information on women who have been trafficked, see the Human Trafficking chapter of this report).

Mortality rates
The five Ipswich murders in December 2006 highlighted the dangers facing many women involved in prostitution. These deaths were picked up by the media and brought to the public’s attention, but many more are not. The death of a woman in prostitution is not an uncommon event: six women involved in prostitution are murdered each year in the UK, and far more die from sexually transmitted diseases, infections, overdoses and poor health. The standardised mortality rate for this group of women is 12 times higher than it is for the general population, the highest for any group of women.145 The murder rate is 18 times higher than that of the general population.146

What is the scale of the problem?
So much of prostitution is hidden that it is very difficult to know exactly how many women are involved. The most commonly quoted figure is 80,000 women in the UK.9 However, this figure is out of date and experts in the field believe there are many more women involved.

The London-based charity Eaves Housing for Women estimated that there were between 5,000 and 8,000 women involved in off-street prostitution in London in 2003.147 It mapped the commercial sex industry across London and calculated that there were at least 730 flats, parlours and saunas and 164 escort agencies selling sex across London. Westminster alone had 130 identified brothels. Only 19% of women working in flats, parlours and saunas were from the UK (25% were from Eastern Europe, 13% from South East Asia, 12% Western Europe, and 2% from Africa).

The numbers of men buying sex gives us an idea about the scale of the problem in the UK. A large (n=4,762) UK probability sample surveys on men aged between 16 and 44 asked whether or not they had bought sex. In 2000, one in 29 men admitted buying sex, rising to one in 11 in London where the largest sex markets are concentrated.148

It is not clear how many children are involved in sexual exploitation around the UK. One survey of Area Child Protection Committees (now called Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards) estimated that an average of 19 girls and three boys were known to each committee, which equates to just over 3,200 children and young people across England.16

What are the causes of prostitution?
Women involved in prostitution commonly report dysfunctional family lives, including time spent in care, domestic violence, child abuse, rape and sexual assault, disrupted schooling, poor educational achievement, drug use and entry into prostitution before the age of 18. Once involved, drug use, homelessness, criminal records and multiple experiences of physical and sexual violence are commonplace.5

The death of a prostitute is not uncommon: six women involved in prostitution are murdered each year in the UK.
This section discusses some of the factors that force these women onto the streets and the factors that keep them there. Drug use, low income and homelessness can be both causes and consequences of prostitution, and it is sometimes difficult to disentangle these issues. They also exacerbate the problem, making it harder for women to leave prostitution. This downward spiral of prostitution is shown in Figure 20.

Child abuse and domestic violence
As many as 85% of women in prostitution report physical abuse in the family, with 45% reporting familial sexual abuse. In a survey by Barnardo’s on young people abused through prostitution, just under one in three reported domestic violence in the home, or parental substance misuse.

Children in the care of the state
If a significant proportion of women in prostitution have experienced child abuse, it is not then surprising that many of them were once ‘in the care’ of the state. The Home Office surveyed 125 people involved in prostitution in 2003 (92 of whom were female). 42% of the participants had been ‘looked after’ by a local authority.

‘[I was in care] and a girl who used to work, I used to go out with her and wait for her. I wanted to belong, it had nothing to do with money. I went in as a mixed up little kid.’

Beth

Many of these women go on to be mothers and have their children placed in the care of the state. This is because of their chaotic lives, which can often be harmful to children. So, the cycle is at risk of being repeated.

School truancy
The charity Barnardo’s found that 75% of children abused through prostitution had been missing from school. There is a clear link, but it is difficult to determine what came first. Truancy is probably a cause and a consequence. Children who are not at school are more exposed and more likely to be picked up by pimps, and once controlled they are even less likely to return to school.

Insecure immigration status
NPC has heard anecdotes of women being forced into prostitution to earn an income because they have an insecure immigration status so cannot claim benefits or find employment. This includes women who have come to the UK to marry British nationals, students and illegal immigrants.

Homelessness
Homelessness can push people into prostitution. According to the Home Office, 22% of women in prostitution reported being homeless or living in temporary accommodation when they first entered prostitution. This suggests that homelessness increases women’s and girls’ risk of moving into prostitution. Others become homeless once they are on the street, often because they are using drugs and their lives are chaotic, so they are unable to pay their rent. The Home Office survey found that nine out of ten women working on the street were homeless or living in insecure housing.

Drug abuse
As many as 95% of women in street prostitution are believed to be using heroin or crack cocaine. So are drugs the cause or the consequence? Research suggests they are both. A crack addiction can lead people to
work day and night to fund their drug habit; 63% of women involved in street prostitution reported that the main reason for working was to fund their drug habit. Desperation for a fix can reduce the price paid for sex. It can also increase a woman’s vulnerability because it makes her less careful about the punter she ‘goes with’ (see Box 23).

'It has just been the drugs that have kept me working, I have tried to leave prostitution, but I just feel that I’m going round in a big bloody circle. It’s hard, you know, trying to quit drugs, and like when you’ve got no money… And it’s the easiest way to get money…’

Woman involved in prostitution

Not all women entering prostitution are using drugs; many start taking drugs to cope with the situation. Drug use then fuels prostitution, because the women need the income they earn from selling their bodies to pay their dealers for their next fix.

Debt and low income

Low income and debt can force women into prostitution, particularly the off-street industry. Women working off-street reported that household expenses, debt and children were the main reasons for moving into prostitution.10

Poor health

A study in five different countries found that two thirds of women in prostitution suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.152 Mental health problems manifest themselves in a number of ways including depression, self-harm, suicidal tendencies and low self-esteem. With limited self-worth it is difficult for women to find the strength to leave. Women in prostitution also suffer from physical problems, and they are more at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

‘Since I’ve been on the street I’ve been in and out of hospital, abscesses, infections, I nearly lost my leg, I’ve lost fingers. It’s just basically got out of control, you know and I’m sat here today, a real mess.’

Natalie

Criminal convictions

Soliciting, brothel work and using Class A drugs are illegal. It is not surprising then that the majority of women working in prostitution have a criminal record. Three quarters of women surveyed in a Home Office study had received a caution and/or conviction for one or more offences.151 If women are arrested they are given a fine. Fines are extremely counter-productive because women go back out onto the street to pay for them.153

Box 23: For what price?

POPPY Project researchers posed as clients and enquired about prices for off-street prostitution services. Quotes ranged from £20 for “hand relief” or a ‘sexy massage’; to £120 for everything.147

Women involved in street prostitution using drugs are ‘cheaper’ than other women because of their desperation to fund their habit. NPC met a woman who said she had been so desperate for a fix she charged as little as £5 for full sex.

“I’ve just been told I’m on my last warning. That means next time I get stopped, I’ll get taken to court and get a £250 fine. How am I going to pay that but by going back out onto the streets? It’s a vicious circle.’

Woman involved in street prostitution

What is the cost?

NPC could not find reports that quantified the cost of prostitution. What we can be certain about is that the cost is high, both to the individual and to society. These women tick every single social services box—they include the homeless, the mentally ill, adults abused as children, single mothers, convicted criminals and drug users. The cost to the state of policing and rehabilitating these women is high. And the costs to the individual are devastating when the impact on their health, well-being and life prospects is considered.

NPC has calculated that violence towards women in prostitution, excluding violence towards trafficked women, probably exceeds £1bn each year. (This is a very tentative cost, and further details can be found in Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women).

What is the debate?

Prostitution is a controversial issue. Not everyone agrees about its definition. Yet how prostitution is viewed will determine how it is approached and tackled by government, local authorities, health services, police and charities. There are three dominant views of prostitution.

Prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation

In line with the Home Office and the majority of experts in the violence against women sector, NPC’s view is that prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation. Only a small percentage of the women actively choose to be involved in prostitution. Migrant and trafficked women, victims of domestic and child abuse and drug addicts make up the majority of women working in this industry. Whilst they are not all physically forced into prostitution, the majority are coerced into it through other means—drug addiction, poverty, abuse or homelessness. Once involved most are exploited by pimps, drug dealers and

Prostitution is a controversial issue. How prostitution is viewed will determine how it is approached and tackled.
The government’s prostitution strategy has no funding attached.

In 1999 the Swedish government decriminalised the selling of sex, and criminalised the purchase of sex. This law change appears to have been effective at reducing the demand for prostitution in Sweden by acting as a deterrent to potential punters. Between 1999 and 2004 the number of women in street prostitution decreased from 2,500 to 500.157 Some critics say that this law change has just shifted the prostitution problem into neighbouring countries such as Finland and Denmark.

The law appears also to have had an effect on the numbers of women who are trafficked into Sweden for sexual exploitation. The National Criminal Investigation Department in Sweden received intelligence from Europol that Sweden is no longer an attractive market for traffickers to operate in. Gunilla Ekberg, a former special adviser on prostitution and trafficking to the Swedish government, reported that ‘In conversations recorded during criminal investigations, pimps and traffickers have expressed frustration about setting up shop in Sweden and attracting customers who are willing to buy these women for prostitution purposes.’157

The prostitute rights movement sees prostitution (or ‘sex work’ as they call it) as a free choice and want it to be legalised. They believe that, if properly managed, it can bring job satisfaction and personal empowerment. This position is supported by a minority of ‘high end’ women in prostitution, who operate out of their own home, charging very high fees for sexual services and dominatrix activities. However, these women are the minority. As Gunilla Ekberg, Co-Director of the international charity the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International said:

‘If prostitution is a free choice, why is it that women who have the fewest choices are always the ones who end up in prostitution?’156

**How is government tackling it?**

The Home Office published its Coordinated Strategy on Prostitution in 2006. Broadly speaking it says the right things, challenging the long-held view that prostitution is inevitable and here to stay and defining it as exploitative. The strategy is not an action plan; there is none. Rather, it is a framework for local authorities, providing them with guidance on how to tackle prostitution in their area. However, the Home Office has no statutory powers to enforce this guidance, so local authorities have no incentive to act on it. In addition, there is no funding attached to this strategy.

One important piece of work that is commendable and being carried out at the time of writing is the government’s root and branch review of prostitution. This will examine the effects of laws and policies on prostitution in countries such as Sweden, which changed its law in 1999 to criminalise buying sex and de-criminalise selling sex. The Swedish government argue that the numbers of women involved in prostitution has decreased as a result (see Box 24). Charities such as the POPPY Project in London have been lobbying the government to adopt a modified version of the Swedish model. This review is a step in the right direction.

**The role of local government**

Local authorities and their partners are not responsible for tackling prostitution per se. There are no mandatory targets around prostitution. However, in some areas local partnerships may decide that, in order to tackle crime and the drug problem in the community, they should tackle prostitution. In this case the targets set would be crime and drug-related. Funds are attached to these targets and this is a potential source of funding for charities working with these women.

**Criticisms of local authorities and their partners**

Limited funding for prostitution support services. This is because local authorities are not required to tackle prostitution in their area.

Local authorities and the police do not take a victim focused approach. Local authorities see women in prostitution as a nuisance, so the...
issuing of ASBOs is common place. ASBOs simply move the women into other areas, where they are on unfamiliar territory and without the support systems that they have established (e.g., health services, drop-in centres and friends). If they do not move, they risk breaking their ASBOs and going to prison. Such interventions do not support women to exit prostitution and lead safer lives. Police often treat women as criminals, rather than victims. For example, they install CCTV cameras to monitor soliciting, and they run police ‘crackdowns’ on brothels. However, following the murders of five women in prostitution in Ipswich, police have increasingly recognised that women in prostitution are vulnerable and more at risk of becoming victims of violence.

Agencies are not working together to tackle prostitution. Prostitution is a cross-cutting issue. It is linked to health, homelessness, poverty, crime, drugs, social justice, sexual abuse, children and communities. Agencies are not working together to tackle the issue. Too often it is seen as ‘everyone else’s problem’ and it is difficult to get agencies to commit to tackling it. Some Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships have set up prostitution forums that bring agencies together to work out how to tackle the problem in their area. However, these are few and far between, attendance is not compulsory and they are usually only set up to deal with the visible problems of street prostitution.159

Women face barriers to accessing state-provided services such as health, drug and alcohol and housing services. Many women feel that statutory, mainstream services judge and discriminate against them. Women report having been treated badly, told they are to blame for their situation, and are treated as victims without a decision-making capacity.159 If women have a negative experience of statutory services then they are unlikely to use them next time, and become increasingly isolated and excluded from the mainstream. The expectation of disapproval and fear that their children may be taken away from them discourage women from asking for help and support.160

Inadequate law enforcement. More needs to be done to monitor off-street prostitution, through raids and through greater scrutiny of special treatment licenses for massage parlours and saunas.

How are charities tackling it?

Charities have a major part to play in tackling prostitution. Crucially, charities are victim-focused, and categorise prostitution as a human welfare issue, rather than a crime issue. Unlike statutory services, charities usually do not judge or discriminate against the women. The outcome is that women involved in prostitution are more likely to trust and use charities. Trust is something that underlies the work that charities do and is a prerequisite to any successful intervention.

Charities working to tackle prostitution work in the following areas:

- tackling some of the factors that push women into prostitution, such as child abuse and homelessness;
- working to prevent adult prostitution, by identifying, supporting and protecting sexually exploited children;
- tackling the demand for prostitution, by raising public awareness of the realities of prostitution;
- minimising the harm women suffer on the streets by encouraging safer sex, safer drug use and safer working conditions;
- supporting women in off-street prostitution through outreach work in brothels and saunas;
- providing holistic support services to help women exit prostitution;
- coordinating local agencies to improve services for women involved in prostitution;
- providing legal support and advocacy to women involved in the court process; and
- running court diversion schemes to divert women into support services and out of the criminal justice system.

Prostitution is an issue with links to many others: health, homelessness, poverty, drugs, crime and sexual abuse.

![Diagram showing the relationship between Prevention, Provision of services, and Prosecution and justice.](image-url)

When the evidence for results exists, donors should invest in prevention, particularly given that the potential pool of victims is limitless. There are a number of different ways that donors can prevent women from entering prostitution and hence avoid the violence that they are at risk of experiencing. These include tackling the root causes of prostitution such as drug problems and child abuse; intervening early to support sexually exploited children; educating children in schools about the dangers or grooming and running away; and tackling the demand for prostitution by raising awareness of the realities of prostitution amongst the general public and potential buyers of sex.

Tackling the root causes

Prostitution has multiple causes, including poverty, drug abuse and homelessness. It has a particularly strong link with child abuse. In one study, two thirds of young people...
exploited through prostitution had been sexually abused within the family.146 The root causes of prostitution must be addressed if prostitution has any chance of being prevented.

Donors could invest in charities that are working to tackle some of these social problems. For example, the charity the Lucy Faithfull Foundation works with child sexual offenders to help prevent abuse by reducing their risk of offending. It runs a national helpline for people concerned about their own sexual behaviour or that of others, regarding child sexual abuse. It offers ex-offenders and potential abusers support through the helpline and through face-to-face counselling. In 2006/2007 the helpline received 172 calls per month, 75% of which were from the target audience. It also runs a public education campaign, Stop It Now!, to raise awareness of the issue of child abuse, and about where to get help. Surveys show that it has increased public awareness of child sexual abuse from 4% to 20% in Surrey between 2002 and 2004.

**Tackling child sexual exploitation**

Studies consistently show that a significant proportion of women in prostitution were children when they first became involved.150 The Children’s Society interviewed 50 sex workers in 1999: 64% of the sample entered prostitution before the age of 16, and 48% before the age of 14.150 Donors should consider funding charities that are working to prevent the sexual exploitation of children, such as Barnardo’s, which was the first charity to work with children engaged in sexual exploitation. It now has 16 established projects around the UK, with a further five in development. Its staff aim to decrease risk factors (eg, drug and alcohol use and association with ‘risky adults’). The first step is to establish contact, through outreach work. Staff then provide counselling and support on issues from building self-esteem to exploring healthy relationships. It helps around 150 children each year. A two-year evaluation of ten of its services showed that, for those who were being exploited at the beginning of the project, three quarters showed a reduced level of exploitation. Of these children, one third were in a stable situation and had ended all exploitative relationships.

**Educational work in schools**

NPC has come across a number of educational programmes for use in schools to raise awareness of sexual exploitation and grooming by potential perpetrators. Most are delivered by charities or individual schools or local authorities. They are usually delivered in sex and relationship education or PSHE, both of which are not compulsory parts of the curriculum. Barnardo’s published the educational resource packs Nae Danger in 2005 and Protecting Self in 2006 to raise children’s awareness of the dangers of running away and being involved with ‘risky’ adults. The London-based charity Beatbullying is doing some work in partnership with the POPPY Project on grooming. The local charity Walsall Street Teams has developed an education pack out of its direct work with sexually exploited children in Walsall.

It is difficult to determine the impact of education work in schools. Evaluations are carried out, but they tend to be based on surveys that are taken just before and just after the course. NPC is not aware of any evaluation that has tracked the progress of the young women, and so there is no proof that these programmes prevent women and girls from moving into prostitution. However, there is no doubt that they raise awareness, and it is logical to assume they may even reduce the risk of some girls being exploited.

The newly formed group, Sexual Bullying and Exploitation Forum, is drawing together expertise from a range of youth-focused charities and is committed to promoting innovation in sex education to prevent child sexual exploitation in all of its forms.

**Tackling the demand for prostitution**

Another way to prevent prostitution is to tackle demand. Men’s demand for prostitution drives the sex industry. Without the demand, the supply of women and girls would not be necessary and the market would collapse.

The government is doing very little to tackle demand, despite its obligations under international law (Palermo protocol*). Charities are doing good work in this area, and they rely on private funding in the absence of government support. This section outlines the activities that charities are delivering to tackle the demand for prostitution.

**Public education campaigns**

The buying of sex has become more socially acceptable in the past decade. Many punters view it as a form of shopping, where women are a commodity that can be bought and then given Amazon-style reviews on websites such as Punternet.

‘For anyone wanting to try a Soho walk-up this flat is as good as anywhere—the girls here are well established pros and not East European sex slaves like in many of the other places’.

*Quote from a man on Punternet147*

Campaigns should challenge this acceptability and change attitudes, by raising awareness about the realities of prostitution. The POPPY **

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* An optional protocol of the UN Convention against Transnational Crime 2000 to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children.
Project ran an awareness-raising campaign in London in autumn 2007 to raise awareness about what life is really like for women in prostitution. It posted advertisements in tube stations and on buses. Its target audiences were punters and victims of prostitution and trafficking. As well as changing attitudes, the POPPY Project hopes to raise awareness about where women can get help. The campaign ran for one month and cost £40,000.

The National Christian Alliance on Prostitution is also doing some work in this area, as are many grassroots campaign organisations.

NPC does not know of any public education campaigns in the UK that have been evaluated. However, other campaigns that have challenged the public’s acceptance of practices such as smoking and unprotected sex/HIV, have been successful.

Educating men who buy sex

NPC has not come across any programmes that are targeted at potential buyers of sex, or those who have purchased sex, in the UK. The international charity Coalition Against Trafficking in Women ran a young men’s camp on gender issues, sexuality and prostitution in the Philippines, which was most successful. It changed the attitudes and potentially the practices of the 356 men directly involved, and over 4,000 others that the participants worked with after graduating from the camp (see Box 25). This is an international charity that is doing excellent work. NPC would like to see more activity like this in the UK, given how effective it has been at changing the attitudes of young men in the Philippines.

Research on the men who buy sex

If policy-makers and statutory agencies wish to tackle the demand for prostitution more effectively, they must understand and challenge the reasons why men buy sex. Over the past decade or so there has been a lot of research into how women enter prostitution, and their experiences. Little research has been carried out on the men who buy sex. In 2007, Safe Exit Tower Hamlets (a project at Toynbee Hall in east London) commissioned the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit at the London Metropolitan University to carry out some research to explore the decision-making process of men who buy sex.161

Researchers surveyed 105 men (recruited through newspaper adverts). Over 50% said they felt nervous paying for sex, and 75% reported that something might stop them. This is encouraging and shows that men can be deterred from buying sex. It can also be used to inform awareness-raising campaigns targeted at punters. These should focus on tapping into men’s own unease, rather than highlighting the chance of a criminal sanction.161 This research is now being used to design activities that tackle demand through changing the attitudes of men who buy, or are likely to buy, sex.

Message for donors: prevention

Women in prostitution, in particular street prostitution, are exposed to high levels of violence. Donors have an important role to play in preventing women from entering this dangerous way of life, especially given that government activity is nascent in this area. There are a number of different approaches to prevention, which tend to either focus on tackling the supply (issues that make women and girls at risk of entering prostitution) or tackling the demand for prostitution. Some activities have a stronger evidence base than others. However, those that do not, such as awareness-raising activities and campaigns, should not be dismissed because their results are hard to measure. They are necessary and will potentially have a widespread impact. However, the risk of investment is significantly higher because success is not guaranteed.

Box 25: Young men’s camp on gender issues, sexuality and prostitution in the Philippines

In the Philippines, 356 young men who were potential buyers of sex, or who had purchased sex, took part in the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women project. Each participant attended six three-day workshops over the year. The men were helped to reflect on their relationship with women. They were asked to play women’s roles—those of their mothers and sisters—as part of their gender sensitivity training. They also discussed the levels of violence against women, including domestic violence, rape and prostitution, and the part that men play in these. Survivors of prostitution spoke to the young men about their experiences, and the hardship and abuse they endured. Jean Enriquez from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, said that this has the strongest impact on the young men. ‘There’s a lot of crying during the camps when the men realise how much they have been abusing women.’

The young men who took part were all leaders in their schools or communities so they had the means to share with others what they had learned. Many of the graduates went on to hold forums in their schools and communities to change the attitudes of their family and peers.

Feedback from the camp graduates shows that it changed attitudes. One man said: ‘I learned that prostituted women should not be discriminated against and instead be helped’. Another said: ‘I want to promote equality, be an advocate and make a difference in the lives of women’.
Most women are forced into prostitution. They do not choose to lead a life that, for the majority, is violent and chaotic. Many have no home, suffer physical and mental health problems, severe drug addictions, violent partners and poverty. It is these problems that keep them in prostitution, and prevent them from escaping. Women in prostitution have multiple needs and require intensive and ongoing support. Most importantly they need to be given hope that they will be able to leave behind this Hades on earth where violence and abuse are endemic.

Charities provide much-needed user-centred health and support services to women in prostitution, linking in with other agencies where necessary. Such support projects are few and far between because funds at the local level are not always available. A 2007 report by the End Violence Against Women Campaign found that less than one in ten local authorities in the UK has support services for women in prostitution.1

Broadly speaking, charities offering support to women in prostitution can be split into two groups: those that focus on minimising the harm that women are exposed to, and those that focus on helping women exit prostitution.

Harm minimisation projects
Harm minimisation projects vary in size and in terms of what they offer, but most of them hand out food, offer sexual health services and provide women with information about violent punters (the ‘ugly mugs’ scheme). The Manchester-based charity MASH is a sexual health promotion/HIV prevention charity for women in prostitution in its area, which uses the model of harm reduction. It provides women in brothels and massage parlours with a comprehensive sexual health service, including hepatitis B vaccinations, condoms, sexual and general health information and advice, including pregnancy testing. Outreach workers also work with women on the streets. They provide women with a fast-track referral to drug treatment and genito-urinary medicine clinics, personal safety advice and personal attack alarms.

Exiting projects
Exiting projects will provide many of the same services as harm minimisation projects, such as handing out condoms and screening for sexually transmitted diseases. Like harm minimisation projects, they aim to reduce the violence that the women are exposed to. However, they go much further. They provide women with the services that they need in order to exit, such as drug treatment, housing support and vocational training. This is what women in prostitution want. In a nine country study on women in prostitution 89% of the women said they wanted to leave prostitution.155

Most exiting projects reach out to the women through their outreach and drop-in services where women meet caseworkers who then work with them intensively as individuals. Figure 21 illustrates the services charities offer women along the pathway to exiting prostitution.

Outreach
Evidence from a Home Office evaluation of 11 projects supporting women to exit prostitution shows that outreach is crucial. It allows support workers to help this hard-to-reach group, and build up a relationship based on trust. It is only at this point that women will consider accepting help, visiting the drop-in and exploring routes out.162 Outreach is also a way to offer them on-the-spot help, including harm reduction advice and information, condoms, needle exchange, information about treatment and health services.160

‘Most days all I eat is the food you give me from the van—my money goes straight on drugs for me and my partner.’163

Client of an outreach service

Figure 21: Some of the services available to women trying to exit prostitution
Outreach workers for women in brothels have the additional challenge of building trust with ‘management’ or pimps. This can be difficult. Some experts think that outreach in brothels is not always effective because women may feel unable to speak freely on site. Others disagree. Charities such as the Praed Street Project in London think that outreach work in brothels is essential because it is a way to identify trafficked women.

Drop-in centres
Charities identify women in prostitution through their outreach work. Where possible, they encourage them to visit a drop-in centre near or within the beat. These centres have three purposes.

- A safe place. Many of the women are homeless, living in crack dens or on the street. Drop-in centres provide them with a safe space to go, where they can socialise, eat, wash and rest.
- A place to access health services and information. GPs, mental and sexual health services sometimes deliver surgeries from within the drop-in centre.
- A place to access one-to-one support.

One-to-one support
Exiting projects, through intensive, one-to-one support, help these women overcome the obstacles to escaping their life in prostitution. Case workers act as advocates to broker the provision of mainstream services. In doing so they help women to secure a suitable place to live, access drug treatment and mental health services, access their children, and gain employment and training. In most cases the case work is very intense: case workers usually have to accompany the women to appointments because their chaotic state can mean they forget when to go. Case workers also provide women with a listening ear and friendship, which is something that many of these women rarely experience. The women know they have someone to turn to, and may choose to seek their advice if faced with important decisions, such as whether or not to move in with their boyfriend/pimp or whether or not they should get in touch with their family. Crucially the case workers listen to the women, and it is the needs of the women that always come first. There are a handful of prostitution exiting charities across the country, all of which are small and serve their immediate community. Examples include One25 in Bristol and TRUST in London.

The following sections discuss some of the barriers to exiting in more detail, and how charities are helping women to overcome them.

Access to drug treatment
Drug addiction keeps women in prostitution to fund their habit. It also means they become chaotic, which can prevent them from securing housing and alternative employment. Research shows that drug services need to be available at the point at which women decide they need them, otherwise women may disappear from services ‘into chaos’. At present some women have to wait a number of weeks before they can secure a first appointment. This is an opportunity missed. Charities such as U-turn in east London facilitate referral to treatment services. Other charities such as Streetreach in Doncaster offer their own in-house drugs treatment services.

‘At first I just used the needle exchange, then got to know people, now you can’t keep me away. I hope to do my detox soon.’

Client of Streetreach
Charities help women overcome drug addictions, homelessness and other barriers to exiting prostitution.

Access to housing
Appropriate accommodation is crucial if women are to stay safe. It is also essential if women are to exit prostitution successfully and access education and employment. However, women in prostitution, particularly those working on the street, face significant difficulties in accessing suitable housing.105 Their chaotic state may mean they fail to turn up for their appointment with the housing department. Even if they do, they are not always helped.

- Firstly, there is a massive shortage of crisis housing and supported housing for women in prostitution across the country.
- Secondly, many of them have a negative housing background because of rent arrears, and local authorities have no duty of care for these women.
- Thirdly, women in prostitution, particularly those using illegal drugs, do not meet the criteria for some types of social housing, including many refuges.107

Caseworkers take these women to appointments and advocate to housing providers on their behalf.

Some local authority housing is inappropriate for women who are trying to exit prostitution—hostels on or near the beat, for instance or mixed housing accommodating drug users.

Some women’s refuges will accept women in prostitution, as long as they are not using drugs and do not take clients back to the refuge. The Nia Project in Hackney runs refuges for victims of domestic violence and Tyneside Cyrenians, a large homelessness charity in Newcastle, runs a women-only hostel. Both of these charities accept women in prostitution. This type of accommodation is scarce so many women in prostitution end up living in unsuitable housing.

Training and careers advice
Many women in prostitution feel they have no alternative because other jobs do not offer the same economic benefits.106 For example, women working in off-street prostitution can earn up to £400 for a two-and-a-half day week (around £20 an hour). They would have to sacrifice this for a menial job that offers £5.50 an hour.108 Women working on the street generally have few qualifications and so finding an alternative ‘job’ is difficult.109 Training and employment are essential to successful routes out of prostitution. They build confidence and self-esteem and increase the prospect of long-term change.110 Case workers highlight training opportunities and provide career support (e.g., help with CVs and application forms and interview training) to women trying to exit.

Case work is time consuming and lengthy because many of these women are deeply troubled with multiple issues and extremely chaotic lives. Many women will make positive steps, for instance moving off drugs and into a home, but due to other factors, such as a pimp’s control over them or a lack of income, may relapse again. Unlike statutory services, charities recognise this and work alongside the women to help them move forward in many areas of their lives.

Are exiting projects successful?
A report commissioned by the Home Office on models of tackling prostitution found that services that offer a combination of outreach and one-to-one support are shown to move the women from chaos to stability and that this is the most important step that a woman can make before she actually exits.105 But do they successfully help women to exit? Most charities record how many women exit prostitution each year, and the steps they make before doing so. For example, in 2006 over one third of the 52 women receiving One25’s one-to-one support stopped working in prostitution. NPC has not come across any baseline figures so it is difficult to determine how powerful these results are. However, it is understandable that the success rate sounds fairly low because it takes time to help women like Alison (see Box 26) to overcome such a multitude of deep rooted problems.

NPC is not aware of any charity that tracks women’s progress once they have stopped using the organisation’s services. Without this information it is hard to know whether these women exit successfully (ie, for good), or whether they relapse and fall back into prostitution. Many of these women do not want to be contacted, because they want to forget the life they left behind. However, NPC has heard anecdotes of success stories from charities that have been proactively contacted by women who used to use their service.

‘I’ve no doubt without your help, support and friendship, I wouldn’t be here today. You’ve changed our lives for the better. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.’110

What do exiting projects cost?
The time-consuming nature of the support will impact on the costs of exiting projects. We have not fully analysed the cost of exiting projects across the UK. However, we know it costs One25 in Bristol around £4,000 to provide one-to-one support to one woman for one year. Given that only one third of One25’s case load exit prostitution each year, the cost per successful user is much higher, at around £11,000.110

1 This is an over-estimate because it was calculated using One25’s total expenditure, which includes funds spent on 150 women using outreach and the drop-in centre, who do not access one-to-one support.
Who pays?
As mentioned earlier, local government is not required to tackle prostitution, so in many areas there are few funds available for exiting projects. Even if charities are lucky enough to attract funding, it is often restricted to a particular project, such as drug treatment, so exiting projects find it difficult to find funding for their whole organisation.

Coordinating and educating agencies
The charity Toynbee Hall, a large community organisation in east London, runs a project called Safe Exit Tower Hamlets, which coordinates agencies working with women in prostitution in Tower Hamlets. Every two months it brings together all the agencies to discuss ways to improve the services available. Around 30 people from different agencies go to the meetings every two months and there is an email list with a much larger circulation. Safe Exit fundraises and lobbies for new services, and it encourages agencies to work together and share information. For example, it has signed all the agencies up to an information-sharing protocol, so that agencies know that information will be used appropriately and are therefore more willing to share information. Safe Exit has produced a handbook detailing the services available to women in prostitution. It also commissions research into prostitution (for example on the demand for prostitution) and it is looking at ways of using this in its practical work.

The Women’s Support Project, a small charity in Glasgow, runs inter-agency training courses to raise awareness of the harm caused through prostitution. It also runs courses on other forms of violence against women, and is always careful to highlight the links between them.

Message for donors: provision of services
NPC recommends that donors invest in charities supporting women to exit prostitution. Charities that provide exiting services need support from private donors, especially given that they struggle to find funding from statutory services. What is important to note here is that investing in such a charity is high risk relative to an investment in a support service for other victims of violence against women. Exiting successfully may take years because of the chaotic lives these women lead. Despite intensive support, relapse can remain a constant threat, even years after leaving the streets behind.

Box 26: One25 helped Alison escape prostitution
Alison was a heroin addict from the age of 11. She has lived in every major English city, and ended up on a travellers’ site in Bristol. Social services took her eldest child when she was four. Heroin use caused Alison to have many health problems, including trouble with her arteries in her legs, which nearly killed her. When Alison was working the streets death was common place and she said: ‘If that is the worst that can happen to you it’s probably a damn sight better than what you are going through at the time. Now that I am in my right mind, to throw your whole life in someone’s hands for the sake of £25 seems quite remarkable.’

Alison had been working the streets for a couple of years when she got a hot drink and some sandwiches from the One25 van. The One25 staff were friendly and caring, and Alison was touched that someone had acknowledged her and enquired after how she was.

Alison visited the drop-in centre and was assigned a case worker. One25 staff worked alongside Alison for five years whilst she was working in prostitution. They slowly became friends, but it took time as Alison did not have enough of a sense of self-worth to accept help. Her worker at One25 kept visiting her, and helped Alison to get other agencies to find her accommodation and money to live on and to get her child back. Alison says that One25 ‘is a fantastic organisation because they have everything under one roof. And they are consistent in their help whether or not you mess up. Knowing that someone cares is huge.’ Alison has not worked the streets for over four years and now she works as a volunteer for One25.

Message for donors: provision of services
Women in prostitution are often victims of crime, including violence. Like the rest of the population, they need access to services to ensure that justice is done and perpetrators are prosecuted and punished.

Advocacy and legal support
Women in prostitution are even less likely than others to report abuse because of the attitudes held by some of the front-line police, the stigma that is attached to prostitution, fear of the law and the lack of faith in the criminal justice system. If they do report violence, they are unlikely to win in court because they are seen as drug addicts and criminals by juries and judges. It is rare that justice is done for this disenfranchised group of women. They need access to advocacy services, like other victims of domestic and sexual violence. Charities like Hull Lighthouse Project support women through the court system, accompanying them to court, to police identity parades, and they visit women in prison.

Local government is not required to tackle prostitution so in many areas there are few funds available for exiting projects.
Violence against women in prostitution

Court diversion schemes

Prosecuting women for prostitution-related offences can make matters worse. The main penalty for soliciting is a fine, which women then have to turn to prostitution to pay for. Court diversion schemes provide a practical and supportive alternative to the criminal justice system. Instead of being prosecuted, women are referred on to agencies that help them to address some of their underlying problems. In this way women receive justice, because they are being given the help they need to exit a life that most did not choose to enter.

Toynbee Hall’s Safe Exit Project runs a court diversion scheme for women in prostitution in Tower Hamlets, London. Following their arrest, women have to attend appointments with Safe Exit workers. These workers assess each woman’s needs before referring her to relevant support agencies. The cost of the court diversion scheme is around £580 per person per year.

Message for donors: prosecution and justice

There are few funding opportunities for donors who would like to focus on prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women in prostitution and bring about justice for victims. This is because law enforcement falls mainly to the state, and because there are few charities working in this area. That said, advocacy services for women in prostitution and court diversion schemes are an excellent way to ensure these women feel that justice is done.

Summary for donors

Women in prostitution experience frequent and extreme violence. NPC has selected two funding priorities for tackling violence against women involved in prostitution: preventing women being exploited into prostitution and helping them to exit prostitution, shown in Figure 22.

Preventing adult prostitution

Many women enter prostitution after experiencing abuse, neglect or poverty in childhood. In fact, most women in prostitution became involved before the age of 16, and nearly half before the age of 14. Charities such as Barnardo’s work with vulnerable girls to help them escape sexually exploitative relationships and prevent them from eventually moving into adult prostitution. This offers donors a rare chance to intervene relatively early.

Other charities, such as the POPPY Project, run large-scale public education campaigns to raise awareness about the realities of prostitution, and by doing so curb the demand for paid sex. POPPY’s advertisements, which were placed in public spaces throughout London, also alerted victims to the support available to them.

Support to leave prostitution

The overwhelming majority of women involved in prostitution want to exit, but they find it incredibly difficult to do so on their own. Donors can fund charities like One25 that help these extremely vulnerable women to leave prostitution, and abuse, behind them. They do this by helping women to overcome other issues, such as drug or alcohol problems and homelessness, which may be trapping them in prostitution. Exiting projects are high risk: women in prostitution have such chaotic lives and multiple needs that, even with help, fewer than half exit prostitution.

Exiting projects are high risk: women in prostitution have such chaotic lives and multiple needs that, even with help, fewer than half exit prostitution.

Figure 22: Funding priorities for tackling violence against women in prostitution

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<th>Provision of services</th>
<th>Prosecution and justice</th>
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<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>preventing adult prostitution</td>
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Human trafficking

Two hundred years after the slave trade was abolished women are being trafficked into sexual slavery in the UK. Trafficking into sexual exploitation is a hidden problem. Thousands of people pass through Heathrow airport every day but do not notice the slave auctions that are alleged to go on there. It can be difficult to tackle such an underground problem. There are estimated to be 4,000 women in the UK who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation.

Human trafficking is driven by market forces, specifically the demand for prostitution in the UK, and the supply of vulnerable girls in countries such as Lithuania and Thailand. Trafficked women are subjected to prolonged and horrific acts of violence and abuse. They are threatened, beaten, imprisoned and forced to have sex with men every day. Their psychological symptoms compare to those of victims of torture. Those lucky enough to escape experience further problems. After having been hidden so well, they may find it difficult to live in the UK on their own; they may not know how to catch a bus, let alone how to claim benefits, find a job or fight for their immigration status. These women badly need help to get away from their trafficker, a safe place to stay, psychological support to get over their experience, as well as help integrating into the UK, or reintegration back into their home country.

Funding priorities

Women need in-depth and long-term help to rebuild their lives because of the trauma they have endured. Donors should fund charities that provide specialist accommodation and support to victims of human trafficking in the UK. These organisations should have a track record in providing specialist services to victims of rape and violence.

Key facts

- There are 4,000 women in the UK who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation.
- Three quarters of trafficked women have been physically assaulted. For example, being kicked while pregnant, burned with cigarettes, and hit with bats.
- NPC has heard reports of women being gang raped by pimps and traffickers to ‘break women in’ so they submit and do not ‘make trouble.’
- The psychological impact of trafficking compares to that of victims of torture.
- NPC heard about the existence of ‘try before you buy’ policies, where pimps and their friends take a trafficked woman home and rape her, then revisit the trafficker with a price.
- Pimps that control a victim working in a brothel can make profits exceeding £50,000 per year.

Victims’ voices

‘I feel like they’ve taken my smile, and I can never have it back.’

‘They told me they would cut me into pieces and send me back like that. Every single day I heard the threat “I’ll kill you bitch”.’

‘I have been raped, beaten, sold, cut with knives and threatened. I have scars and I am depressed.’
Box 27: Maria’s story

Maria came from a very poor family in the countryside of an Eastern European country. She did not regularly attend school and did not have a good formal education. Her father was an alcoholic and would often beat her and the rest of her family. When Maria was 13 she was sold by her sister to a man she did not know. She was taken to Italy by boat. On arrival she was sold again, and taken to a house where she was raped and beaten. One day she managed to escape, so went back home. However, after just four days she was sold again, this time by her father.

Maria was taken to Italy and kept prisoner for seven months. The pimps controlled her eating and made her drink vinegar. Eventually she was smuggled into the UK in a lorry. Maria worked in forced prostitution in London for five years, where she was forced to sell her body to 65-70 clients each day. The traffickers threatened to kill her many times, and threatened to do the same to her sister. Maria was beaten and raped by her traffickers frequently. Finally Maria escaped with the other women in her house when they ran away with the owner’s boyfriend and went to the police who referred her onto support services. Although she is now free, the physical and emotional scars are a cruel and constant reminder of the traumas she endured in her late childhood. 169

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is a heinous crime and a gross violation of human rights. It is the modern day form of slavery. Traffickers use violence, coercion and deception to force their victims to work against their will, in order to profit from their victims’ suffering.

Definition

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime states that:

‘Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of person, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the absence of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving and receiving of payments or benefits to achieve consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.’

Human trafficking should not be confused with people smuggling, which does not involve coercion, deception, control or exploitation of the victim.

Types of human trafficking

Trafficking for sexual exploitation

Like Maria (see Box 27), women are primarily trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation (usually prostitution, but also pornography). This report focuses on trafficking for sexual exploitation because it is a gendered trade and disproportionately affects women.

Trafficking for forced labour

Men and women are also trafficked into forced labour. They are found working in a broad range of sectors, including agriculture, construction, cleaning, nursing and care work, and domestic work. 172

This is a trade that affects both men and women. However, women are particularly at risk of physical and sexual abuse because of their vulnerable situation. This report touches on the issue of trafficking into forced labour, but does not discuss it in any depth.

Internal trafficking

Trafficking is defined by the coercion and movement of a victim for exploitation, with no mention of crossing borders. Moving a victim within the UK is known as internal trafficking. Young British girls who have been lured into prostitution can also become victims of internal trafficking if they are moved within the country and cannot escape. NPC’s report on child abuse, Not seen and not heard, discusses the issue of child sexual exploitation in more depth.

Child trafficking

Children, as well as adults, are trafficked into the UK for sexual and labour exploitation. Children are more likely to be trafficked into domestic servitude, cannabis factories and restaurants. The issue of child trafficking was covered in NPC’s report on child refugees and asylum seekers, A long way to go, and is not discussed in detail in this report.

Human trafficking is illegal

The trafficking of human beings is a crime and is illegal under domestic and international law.

UK legislation

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 created specific offences of trafficking into, within, and out of the UK. The offences carry a maximum penalty of 14 years. There are equivalent Scottish provisions in the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003. Since 2004, when these laws were introduced, there have been over 71 convictions for trafficking for sexual exploitation. 179

In theory, men who pay for sex with trafficked women could be charged with rape. However, in practice it would be very difficult to convict someone as it would be difficult to prove that the defendant had knowledge that a woman had been trafficked.

International human rights instruments

Human trafficking is a cross-border issue. It is therefore on the international agenda, and there are a number of international tools that legislate against it, including the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, and its optional
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children (the Palermo Protocol).

**Human trafficking and violence are inseparable**

The trafficking of women for sexual exploitation is an extreme form of violence against women. Women who are trafficked are subject to prolonged and horrific acts of violence and abuse. NPC has heard reports of women being gang raped by pimps and traffickers to ‘break in their women’ so they submit and do not ‘make trouble’. Once working in prostitution, trafficked women are beaten, raped, imprisoned and some are forced to have sex with up to 70 men each day. Others are less physically abused but are psychologically tortured, and live in fear of their own and their families’ lives. Witnessing beating of other trafficked women is not uncommon, and very distressing. The pimps make examples of women who fail to comply, to discourage other trafficked women from doing the same.

In 2006 the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine carried out the first quantitative study on trafficked women’s experiences of violence, and the impact it had on their physical and psychological health. It interviewed 207 women who had been trafficked into prostitution, and a handful who had been sexually abused while working as domestic slaves. It discovered that:

- nearly all of the women (95%) had been either physically or sexually assaulted;
- 76% reported physical assault by traffickers, pimps, madams, brothel and club owners or boyfriends, eg, being kicked while pregnant, burned with cigarettes, heads slammed against the wall, hit with bats, punched in the face;
- 90% reported having been physically forced or intimidated into sex or doing something sexual;
- 89% reported threats of violence to themselves;
- 36% reported threats to their children and family; and
- 77% reported no freedom of movement, and those who reported a degree of freedom generally described being accompanied by minders to prevent their escape.

**What is the impact?**

It is not surprising, given the atrocious acts of violence that trafficked women are subjected to, that their psychological symptoms compare to, or exceed those experienced by torture victims.

Most of them experience repeated abuse. Studies show that the negative impact of multiple traumas is greater than those of a single traumatic experience. The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine study interviewed trafficking victims within the first two weeks of their arrival at a support project:

- over half of the women experienced 12 or more physical symptoms (eg, weight loss, stomach pains, fainting, pelvic pain, fractures, gynaecological infections); and
- over 70% reported ten or more symptoms associated with depression and anxiety (eg, suicidal thoughts, panic spells, anger, feelings of hopelessness).

The women were interviewed 90 days later. Their physical symptoms had subsided but the mental health problems endured, with over 50% experiencing ten or more symptoms.

‘It comes every time that I close my eyes … when I testified against my traffickers … and when I am at home … always in my dreams. I see myself still being taken to clients.’

Trafficked women’s mental health problems can be exacerbated by things that affect other immigrants, such as loneliness, language problems and cultural differences, in addition to the threat of being deported.

**Box 28: Why are so many Lithuanians being trafficked to the UK?**

Of the POPPY Project’s service users, 14% come from Lithuania, making Lithuania the most prominent country of origin. This is particularly striking given the small size of the Lithuanian population, which is 3.5 million. Experts consulted by NPC said that Lithuanian women are more likely to be trafficked to the UK than other destination countries because the UK is home to a large Lithuanian population, so women are more likely to want to migrate there to find work. (Estonians tend to be trafficked to Finland, and other nationalities go to Germany and Italy.) In addition, there are also established organised criminal networks that have been entrenched in trafficking women from Lithuania to the UK for decades.

So what is creating the supply of potential trafficking victims? Unfortunately very little credible research has been carried out on the causes. NPC was told by the Lithuanian charity, the Women’s Issues Information Centre, that following EU accession there has been an increase in unemployment, which has increased the supply of potential migrants and the potential supply of trafficking victims. NPC also learnt that 80% of the trafficked women seen by the International Organisation for Migration come from ‘vulnerable groups’, including those leaving care (orphanages and children’s institutions), and 70-80% have been abused in their past. Despite the lack of research, both charities and the Lithuanian government agree that abuse and neglect make women more vulnerable to trafficking because of their desire to move abroad in search of a better life.

**The psychological symptoms of trafficked women compare to, or exceed those, experienced by torture victims.**
Who are the women?

Where do they come from?

Most of the women trafficked into the UK come from Eastern Europe, West Africa and the Far East (mainly China and Thailand). Operation Pentameter, the first proactive anti-trafficking policing operation involving all 55 forces in the UK, identified 88 victims in its brothel raids in 2006. They came from 22 different countries.

Last year the charity the POPPY Project, the largest victim support project for trafficked women in the UK, had 166 referrals for women from 37 different countries. Lithuania was by far the most prominent country of origin; one in six of the women that POPPY helps is from Lithuania (see Box 28).

How are they recruited?

Some women are recruited by force, such as kidnapping and abduction. However, evidence suggests that it is through various patterns of deception that most women and girls are initially recruited.

The most common mode of recruitment is deception through offers of employment (with no sex industry connotations). Victims are targeted using a number of techniques, for example, advertisements in newspapers for legitimate job opportunities such as au pairs and bar staff. Some women are deceived through offers of employment in dancing or entertainment. Other women know they will be working in prostitution in the UK, but they have no idea that they will be enslaved, degraded and abused.

Women are also recruited by traffickers posing as their boyfriends (this is known as the Lover Boy scenario). Young girls are particularly vulnerable to this recruitment technique, because they are naive and easily fall prey to traffickers deceiving them through offers of marriage and a new life in the UK. The International Office for Migration in Lithuania told NPC that trafficking victims in the UK have started to recruit their friends back home. This is probably because they have been blackmailed into doing so, using threats of harm to victims or to their families.

‘The girls I’ve met … some of them don’t even have a clue what they’re doing, why they came … some of them know why they’re coming … right, some of them knew that they were going to work as prostitutes but they didn’t know they were going to be controlled by Albanians to start with, or some of them they thought they were going to work for themselves as prostitutes.’

Female co-trafficker

Some women, especially Asian women, end up in forced prostitution as a result of debt bondage. Women find they owe a lot of money to the traffickers for ‘facilitating their journey’, especially if they were smuggled in illegally. The gangs will usually charge high interest, conflated by daily living expenses and grossly exaggerated, so many never pay off their ‘debts’.

On arrival in the UK

Women enter the UK normally, on low cost airlines, by bus via a ferry, and on trains from mainland Europe. In some cases those who organised the travel will remain in control of the women. In other cases they will be sold on to pimps in London, many of whom are part of organised networks. NPC heard anecdotal reports of slave auctions in a popular coffee shop in Heathrow, where women were bartered over by potential buyers (pimps) and then sold. A Lithuanian charity, Caritas Lithuania, told NPC about the existence of ‘try before you buy’ policies, where pimps and their friends rape the trafficked woman and then come back to the trafficker with a price. These women go on to work in off-street locations, in flats, saunas, and brothels in London and across the UK. There are few, if any, trafficked women working in street prostitution in the UK.

What is the scale of the problem?

The extent of the human trafficking problem is unclear. It is difficult to gather reliable statistics because the problem is hidden and many women do not define themselves as trafficked (for example, many women think that agreeing to be smuggled means you cannot be trafficked). However, there are some estimates of the scale of the problem.

Unpublished Home Office research estimated that in 2003 there were over 4,000 women in the UK who had been trafficked into sexual exploitation. We cannot judge the validity of this figure because NPC has not seen the research, but all of the experts that we...
consulted agreed that the estimate is too low. In the absence of reliable statistics on the magnitude of the problem of trafficking into sexual exploitation, a number of indicators suggest that only the tip of the iceberg is visible.

- Between 2003 and 2007 the POPPY Project had 722 referrals. However, the project relies on self referrals or official referrals from the police, and only recently has there been awareness of this project outside of London. This suggests that the number of trafficked women in the whole of the UK is much higher.

- In 2006, Operation Pentameter 1 (four months of concentrated operational activity) uncovered 88 trafficking victims in brothels, 12 of which were children aged between 14 and 17.

There has not been enough research to determine the scale of the issue of trafficking for forced labour in the UK. One of the big problems is differentiating between poor working conditions and situations involving forced labour. The newly formed UK Human Trafficking Centre (see Box 29) intends to carry out some research on this issue, and the newly emerging problem of internal trafficking.

It is on the increase

Many of the experts that NPC spoke to said that the number of women being trafficked into sexual exploitation in the UK is increasing. This is corroborated by the fact that ten years ago, 85% of women in brothels were UK citizens, and now 85% are from outside the UK.

In addition, the demand for prostitution by men in Britain is increasing, which is likely to result in increasing flows of trafficked women into the UK. Two large UK probability sample surveys on men asked whether or not they had bought sex. The numbers answering “yes” doubled between 1990 and 2000. In 2000 one in 29 men admitted buying sex, rising to one in 11 in London where the largest sex markets are concentrated.

EU accession by a number of Eastern European countries is thought to have increased the trafficking of women to the UK from that part of the world. Denise Marshall, Chief Executive of the POPPY Project, believes this is because the cost of trafficking a woman into the UK from EU member states has decreased, from around £4,000 to £2,000.

What are the causes?

Human trafficking is driven by market forces, specifically demand for prostitution in destination countries such as the UK, which stimulates the supply of vulnerable women from source countries in Eastern Europe and West Africa.

Box 29: The UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)
The UK Human Trafficking Centre has the following priorities.

Prevention
- Identify demand reduction and prevention methods.
- Develop, coordinate and improve research.
- Coordinate preventative programmes working in collaboration with partner agencies.
- Produce a law enforcement strategy on human trafficking.

Investigation, law enforcement and prosecution
- Engage with partners and coordinate anti-trafficking operational activity.
- Develop, coordinate and facilitate training of the police, immigration services and other agencies.
- Improve intelligence collection and analysis.
- Enhance existing international cooperation and working practices.

Victim support and protection
- Develop, coordinate, promote and facilitate victim care and assistance.
- Develop understanding of and identify recruitment methodologies, victim profiles and trafficking routes.
- Coordinate, promote and facilitate international victim support, assisting with repatriation and reintegration programmes, and working to prevent re-trafficking.
- Develop, coordinate and facilitate training in the care and welfare environment.

Supply side

There is some hard evidence, and a great deal of anecdotal evidence, showing that trafficking victims are targeted by traffickers because they are vulnerable. This suggests that vulnerability, due to abuse, mental illness, poverty, lack of employment and sexual inequalities, contributes to the supply of women for human trafficking. The causes of vulnerability need to be addressed in any strategy to combat human trafficking.

- Physical and sexual abuse. In the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine’s study on trafficked women, 60% reported some form of violence prior to being trafficked, with 32% having been sexually abused and 50% physically assaulted; 15% reported sexual abuse under the age of 15. These rates of violence prior to the women being trafficked compare to some of the highest national prevalence levels of violence against women in the world. So, abused women are more likely to be trafficked.

- Poverty and unemployment. Most of the source countries for trafficking are in the developing world, where poverty is endemic. Unemployment in Eastern Europe is high in post-communist countries, in
As long as there is a huge financial incentive, organised trafficking gangs will continue to buy, sell and use women in the sex industry.

Figure 23: Overlap between trafficking and prostitution

some cases above 40%. Many women believe they can improve their situations by answering newspaper advertisements and going abroad, usually to Western countries, to accept well-paid jobs as waitresses, hairdressers or au pairs. Others know they are going abroad to work in prostitution, and it is the lack of income that is pushing them into going abroad.

• Lack of information and awareness. A lack of knowledge about the issue of trafficking, and naivety, leads to a casual attitude to travelling abroad. Lots of young girls have no idea about the fact that they are at risk of being trafficked, and this ignorance makes them easy prey for traffickers who deceive them with false promises about life in the UK.

Demand side

The demand for cheap labour, and in particular the demand for prostitution, is fueling the trafficking of women and girls into the UK. The issues of prostitution and human trafficking overlap, as Figure 23 shows.

As long as there is demand for prostitution from British men, traffickers will continue to meet it with the supply of commodities: trafficked women. The ‘business’ is hugely profitable. According to the Government’s UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking, the price of a trafficked woman in the UK ranges from £500 to £8,000, with available information suggesting an average of £2,000-£3,000.*

What is the cost?

Research commissioned by the UK Human Trafficking Centre discovered the total economic and social cost of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the UK in 2003 was up to £1bn.† At the time of writing the research was unpublished, so NPC was not able to see how this cost was derived.

How is government tackling it?

Donors interested in learning more about what the government is doing to tackle human trafficking may find the following section helpful. It discusses the government’s approach to the issue, what it has achieved to date, and where it has failed. Others may wish to skip this section and move straight onto ‘How are charities tackling prostitution?’, which discusses what charities are doing about human trafficking, how effective their work is, and how donors can make a difference funding their activities.

Government has made strong progress in recent years

Published action plan on human trafficking

The government drew up its action plan on trafficking in human beings in March 2007. It includes actions on trafficking for forced labour, internal trafficking and child trafficking. It is extremely comprehensive on paper, listing objectives and actions, the party responsible for implementation, the timeline and the indicator of success. NPC discusses some of its intended and implemented actions in the following section.

New funding for victim services

Until very recently the government was doing very little to tackle human trafficking. It was only in 2001 that the government started to pay attention to the issue, when the London-based charity Eaves Housing for Women approached it. In 2003, the Home Office released funding for its new accommodation and support project for trafficked women, the POPPY Project. The Home Office has funded the POPPY Project since then, and doubled its annual grant to £1.2m to pay for the expansion from 25 to 35 beds in 2007. Since 2007, POPPY has been funded by the Ministry of Justice’s Office for Criminal Justice Reform. The Scottish Government established the TARA Project in 2004, to provide support and advice to victims of trafficking for exploitation in Scotland, and to help local services to meet their needs.

Establishment of the UK Human Trafficking Centre

In the run up to the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, the government made a significant commitment to tackling

* Denise Marshall of the POPPY Project worked out that one of POPPY’s Albanian clients earned her trafficker £300 a day, six days a week, and made him £104,000 profit in just 15 months.*

† Denise Marshall of the POPPY Project worked out that one of POPPY’s Albanian clients earned her trafficker £300 a day, six days a week, and made him £104,000 profit in just 15 months.
the modern day form of slavery in the UK. It established the UK Human Trafficking Centre, a multi-agency, police-led unit that provides a central point for the development of expertise and operational coordination in relation to the trafficking of human beings. It works together with agencies such as the police and immigration in the UK, and agencies abroad. It costs around £1m a year to run, and falls under the auspices of the Association for Chief Police Officers (see Box 29). 11

Signing the European Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings

The government signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings in March 2007, which provides a framework for the protection of victims of human trafficking. Once it is implemented, trafficked victims will be entitled to a period of reflection, instead of being sent back to their country of origin. During this time they can access housing, psychological support, medical assistance and legal aid. It also gives them time to recover so they can make informed and considered decisions about their life going forwards, and will potentially have the courage to take the trafficker to court. 176 In January 2008 the government announced its intention to ratify the convention by the end of the year.

New anti-trafficking legislation

The government has also made progress in the areas of law enforcement and prosecution. It introduced legislation to criminalise human trafficking for sexual exploitation by amending the Sexual Offences Act (2003), and criminalising trafficking for forced labour in the Asylum and Immigration Act (Treatment of Claimants) 2004.

Tough sentencing for perpetrators of human trafficking

The average sentence is ten years, which compares favourably to other countries such as Holland, where it is only four years. 146 The most recent data provided to the Home Office shows that there have been 71 convictions for trafficking for sexual exploitation since 2004179 (see Box 30 on Luan Plakici’s sentence).

More law enforcement activity, including Operation Pentameters 1 and 2

Since 2000 the government has really stepped up its anti-trafficking activity. It has formed new bodies, including the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, to tackle organised immigration crime, including human trafficking. Operation Pentameter 1, in February 2006, was the first proactive anti-trafficking policing operation to involve all of the police forces in the UK. Its aim was to raise awareness of the problem across police forces, to arrest pimps and traffickers, and to free victims. It carried out 515 raids on brothels, arrested 232 people and charged 134, and rescued 88 victims from sexual exploitation.176 Operation Pentameter 1 led to the establishment of the UK Human Trafficking Centre. Operation Pentameter 2 ran between October 2007 and March 2008 and at the time of writing, the outcomes were unknown.

Criticisms of government

In the past year the UK government has made a number of commitments to tackling human trafficking. Progress made over the past few years has been significant, and much greater than that in some other violence against women issues, such as prostitution. However, progress is all relative. Other countries, such as Italy, are leagues ahead of the UK, particularly in the area of victim support and protection.

The UK government has still a fair way to go, due to the following problems:

Service provision for victims is poor

The British government is obliged to protect and support victims of trafficking under international human rights laws. However, these instruments are not legally binding and, in practice, are merely recommendations. As a result, current provision for victims of trafficking in the UK is poor. There are only two statutory-funded specialist residential support projects for trafficked women in the whole of the UK. The larger of the two is the POPPY Project in London, but it has strict criteria (laid down by the Home Office) about who it can and cannot accept, so some women go unsupported.

Trafficicking and the associated abuse are not reason enough to be granted asylum

In addition, recent legal aid cuts have meant that many victims have not been able to access any good quality legal advice during the process.

ALBANIAN LUAN PLAČICI TRAFFICKED SEVEN YOUNG WOMEN FROM MOLDOVA AND ROMANIA INTO THE UK, WHO THOUGHT THEY WOULD BE DOING LEGITIMATE WORK. THE GIRLS WERE RAPED, BEATEN, AND FORCED TO HAVE SEX WITH PUNTERS UP TO 20 TIMES A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, IN ORDER TO PAY BACK THEIR ‘£8,000 TRAVEL BILL’. THE POLICE STARTED TO INVESTIGATE IN OCTOBER 2002 WHEN ONE OF THE VICTIMS ESCAPED FROM THE HOUSE WHERE SHE WAS BEING HELD AND FLAUGHTED DOWN A POLICE CAR. THE SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION UNCOVERED A HUGE TRAFFICKING NETWORK. PLAČICI WAS FOUND GUILTY AND ORIGINALLY SENTENCED TO TEN YEARS IN PRISON. THE CPS DEEMED THE CASE UNDULY LENIENT AND REFERRED IT TO THE SOLICITOR GENERAL, HARRIET HARMAN, WHO SENT IT TO THE COURT OF APPEAL. PLAČICI’S SENTENCE WAS INCREASED TO IN APRIL 2004 TO 23 YEARS.

**Box 30: Luan Plakici was convicted for 23 years**

Albanian Luan Plakici trafficked seven young women from Moldova and Romania into the UK, who thought they would be doing legitimate work. The girls were raped, beaten, and forced to have sex with punters up to 20 times a day, seven days a week, in order to pay back their ‘£8,000 travel bill’. The police started to investigate in October 2002 when one of the victims escaped from the house where she was being held and flagged down a police car. The subsequent investigation uncovered a huge trafficking network. Plakici was found guilty and originally sentenced to ten years in prison. The CPS deemed the case unduly lenient and referred it to the Solicitor General, Harriet Harman, who sent it to the Court of Appeal. Plakici’s sentence was increased to in April 2004 to 23 years.
Limited research on all forms of human trafficking

To date there is very limited knowledge about the scale and nature of all forms of human trafficking, the push and pull factors, and how best to tackle it. At the moment very little data is collected. Part of the UK Human Trafficking Centre’s (UKHTC) remit is to identify knowledge gaps and following that to undertake targeted research. However, the Centre has also been tasked with a number of other challenges (see Box 29) and NPC is concerned about whether or not it has the capacity to carry out the volume of research that is desperately needed. Furthermore, despite commitment to a cross-sector approach to expertise, the UKHTC is dominated by law enforcement personnel.

Limited preventative work, especially on the demand side

As stated in the prostitution chapter, little has been done to tackle the demand for prostitution. Trafficking into sexual exploitation is seen as more topical, less controversial and diverts attention and funds away from the far thornier social issue of prostitution, despite the symbiosis between the two issues. Governments in most countries of origin are also failing to deal with problems such as domestic violence and child abuse, which make women more vulnerable to being trafficked.

Lack of commitment to tackling human trafficking by local police forces

Despite the large number of law enforcement agencies at the national level, there is not enough work being done to enforce the law at the local level. Operations Pentameter 1 and 2 only scratched the surface and raids were only carried out on a limited number of brothels. Local police forces need to monitor brothels more closely, and carry out more raids to identify trafficked women and arrest traffickers. However, organised crime including human trafficking, is not yet a police performance indicator (although this is set to change) and therefore it is not core police business.

In addition, some police commanders do not acknowledge that trafficking is a problem in their area. The Commander of one of the London boroughs told Eaves Housing for Women that the residents of Kensington and Chelsea were more concerned about dog fouling than human trafficking, so his borough is not doing anything about trafficking. He said ‘If it doesn’t count, it doesn’t count’.

Immigration staff and local police have difficulties identifying trafficked women

Immigration staff and local police have problems identifying trafficked women and sometimes see them as immigration offenders, not victims.

NPC has heard reports of women being thrown into detention centres because they have been found with no documents, and women being sent straight back home and into the hands of the traffickers. The UK action plan on trafficking in human beings recommends that all key personnel who come into contact with victims have training, but this is not compulsory so the coverage of trained staff across the country is patchy.

Clash between immigration controls and victim support

In relation to trafficking for forced labour, there are concerns that the government’s new points-based migration system would result in an increase in trafficking for domestic servitude if it came into force. The new system removes the right of migrant domestic workers to change employers. If a worker was being abused or exploited, she would face the stark choice of becoming destitute, living with the violence or being deported. At the moment, one quarter of migrant domestic workers registered at the migrant domestic worker charity Kalayaan have been physically abused, and one third have had their passports withheld by their employers.

How are charities tackling it?

There are only a handful of organisations working on the issue of human trafficking in the UK. This is for two reasons. Firstly, fewer women are affected by trafficking than by other forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence. Secondly, the issue of human trafficking has only recently been unearthed as a problem for the UK, so government funds have only recently been made available.

Organisations working specifically on the issue of human trafficking include charities, the police and the UK Human Trafficking Centre, all of which have differing roles. At present, most of the government’s efforts are concentrated on law enforcement and prosecution.

Charities complement this by carrying out the following activities, both here in the UK and abroad:

- awareness-raising activities in source countries to tackle the supply of women. These include migration helplines, public education campaigns, education of school children and at-risk groups;
- poverty reduction programmes in source countries to discourage women from seeking job opportunities abroad and becoming vulnerable to human trafficking;
- tackling the demand for prostitution by trying to change the attitudes of men who are potential buyers, and those who already purchase sex;

Most of the government’s efforts are concentrated on law enforcement and prosecution. Charities have a more victim-focused role.
• supporting victims in the UK, by providing women with accommodation, psychological, practical and legal support;
• repatriation and resettlement services in source countries, for women who are sent back home;
• training for agencies such as the police and immigration services to improve identification and treatment of victims in the UK;
• research on the issue, including the scale of the problem; and
• lobbying the government to improve services.

The rest of this chapter will discuss these activities in more depth, and analyse whether or not donors can have an impact by investing in such activities.

Prevention

In order to prevent human trafficking, there should be measures to tackle the market forces that drive the issues, namely the supply of women from the source countries, and the demand for prostitution in the UK.

Reducing the supply of women

There has to be work in the countries from where trafficked women originate (from now on referred to as ‘source countries’) to try and address some of factors that make women vulnerable, such as poverty, and push them into the hands of traffickers. Coupled with a lack of awareness, these factors generate a ready supply of potential trafficking victims for organised criminal gangs.

Our research on how to tackle the supply of women in source countries is focused on activities in Lithuania. NPC visited Lithuania in June 2007 and met with Lithuanian civil servants, the British Mission and a number of charities. Our research on activities that tackle the supply of women from Lithuania is not exhaustive, and may not be representative of what is happening in other source countries. What it will do is provide donors with an understanding of the sort of work that is being carried out in a country where there is anti-trafficking activity.

Awareness-raising campaigns

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) runs information campaigns in a number of different countries. For example, it ran a year-long campaign in the Baltic States, to raise awareness about traffickers’ recruitment techniques involving fake offers of work abroad. Its campaign image was of a girl strung up on hooks, with puppet-like strings attached—an extraordinarily powerful image (see Figure 24). This was plastered on billboards, posters and television all over the region. Best practice information campaigns should include information on how to migrate safely and legally to the UK, by promoting migration helplines for example.

The IOM did not measure the impact of this campaign. There can be no doubt that it raised awareness of the issue, but there is no way of knowing if this awareness reduced the flow of trafficked women out of the region. Some experts consulted by NPC thought these awareness-raising campaigns were ‘pointless’. This is because some women already know about the risks involved in travelling abroad. They go because they are desperate to leave to escape the poverty or hardship that they have been living with.71

Migration helplines

The IOM campaign material described above also advertised the telephone number for the migration helpline in the area. Migration helplines provide people with information about how to migrate safely, to avoid being trafficked. The charity Missing Persons Family Support Centre runs a migration hotline in Lithuania. It provides people with information on past
cases, and tells people about travel agencies that are legitimate for international travel. **Living for Tomorrow** in Estonia also runs an anti-trafficking hotline. Since it was opened in October 2004, it has received more than 850 calls from people who were going abroad or have recently returned to Estonia.

**Educating school children**

The Serbian charity **Women in Action** runs workshops in elementary and high schools in deprived areas of the country. The workshops cover domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment and trafficking. Awareness-raising work in schools allows for more in-depth, frank discussions about the issue and the opportunity for teachers to dispel any myths about travelling abroad, and the chance for children to hear about past trafficking cases.

**Empowering at-risk girls**

Some girls are more vulnerable and at risk of trafficking than others, for instance, girls from single parent families, children’s homes and rural areas, and girls with mental health problems or problematic behaviour. Work that empowers young girls, boosts their self-esteem and gives them control over their lives improves social integration and reduces their vulnerability to trafficking and prostitution. The **Missing Persons Family Support Centre** in Lithuania runs a programme called ‘Girl Power’ across Lithuania. Last year it was funded by **Save the Children Sweden**. It works in the post-Soviet children’s institutions, psychological support centres, AIDS centres and secondary schools to empower young girls and build their confidence. Group leaders will also help the children access the social and psychological services that they need, outside of the Girl Power sessions. Evaluations show that the programme helps these socially excluded girls form close relationships with new friends, be more confident, and have a better understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship. It also improves school attendance. This sort of programme is similar to some of the work that is carried out in schools in the UK, to raise awareness about sexual exploitation and the dangers involved in running away from home.

**Poverty-reduction programmes**

Many experts believe that international development work is a good way to reduce the supply of women for traffickers to exploit. They argue that awareness-raising activities tackle the symptoms of the problem rather than the root cause. Large-scale programmes that tackle poverty and unemployment are needed to reduce cross-border inequalities in prosperity, and the trafficking and re-trafficking of women.176 This is a job for multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies such as the Department for International Development as part of their wider development work. However, there are charities that work on a smaller scale, providing education and vocational training to at-risk girls. The **Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities**, a charity based in Thailand, provides vocational training and employment opportunities to girls at risk of trafficking. More research needs to be carried out to pinpoint the most effective supply-prevention strategies, and this is something that donors should consider funding.

**Curbing the demand for prostitution**

As we discussed earlier, tackling the demand for prostitution would help to prevent human trafficking. The UK government was doing little to curb demand for prostitution at the time of writing. The limited work that it has done has focused on educating punters (men who buy sex) about human trafficking, and has been short term. Consequently donors have a significant role to play in funding activities that tackle the demand for prostitution as a way of preventing the trafficking of women into sexual exploitation in the UK.

The prostitution chapter outlined a number of different ways to tackle the demand for prostitution, for example, re-educating punters, public education campaigns highlighting the realities of prostitution, and further research. This section will briefly discuss these activities in relation to human trafficking.
Making punters aware of trafficked women

The majority of men who buy sex are not aware of trafficking or that they could be buying sex from a trafficked woman. In a survey of punters by the London Metropolitan University, only six out of the 137 surveyed, had any explicit awareness of trafficking.161

"I don’t like Eastern European girls … they’re coerced into it. I’m not happy to think that someone’s coerced. I mean I went with one and to be honest I really couldn’t go through with it, because I just got the feeling that … I felt she was sort of being compelled, and when I said “I’m going to go”, she was looking quite tearful, so I handed her over the money anyway. I felt concerned was someone controlling her in the background … I have noticed a big influx and they are a hell of a lot cheaper, they undercut British girls every time."

The Home Office, in its action plan, stated that it is aware of the need to educate men who buy sex about the issue of trafficking. The police-led Operation Pentameters 1 and 2 ran awareness-raising campaigns in men’s magazines and on websites, to make punters aware that the next time they buy sex they could be doing so from a trafficked woman who has not consented to sexual activity. This is rape. At the time of writing, Operation Pentameter 1 has been evaluated but the final report has not yet been released.

Charities are also working on the demand-side. As mentioned in the chapter about ‘Violence against women in prostitution’, the POPPY Project recently ran a campaign to raise awareness about the realities of prostitution. It posted advertisements in tube stations, on buses, and in police stations, to promote awareness about the support available to victims. Its target audiences are punters and victims of prostitution and trafficking. As well as changing attitudes it hopes to raise awareness of where these women can get help. The small, campaigning group, The Truth Isn’t Sexy, is a recently formed grassroots campaigning organisation whose mission is to inform potential punters about the links between prostitution and trafficking. It distributes beer mats and posters that tell people to think before they buy sex, because they could be doing so from a trafficking victim.

‘Too often, the practice has been that the victims are supported and the traffickers prosecuted—rightly so—but the punters, the clients paying for sex with the women who have been abducted and brought to this country, are told to go on their way. We should recognise that if we tackle the demand side of this evil trade, we will go a long way.’

Harriet Harman 161

The human rights charity the Helen Bamber Foundation put on an extremely powerful exhibition in Trafalgar Square in 2007. It educated people about the issues of human trafficking, told from a victim’s perspective.

Research

There has been very little research carried out on the issue of human trafficking into sexual exploitation, and even less has been done on internal trafficking, and child trafficking. Nobody really knows the scale of the twin problems of prostitution and trafficking. Neither is there much evidence for ‘what works’. One huge gap in research is around repatriation and resettlement and whether or not these women are re-trafficked when they return home. More research needs to be carried out on the issue, to better prevent, protect and provide for trafficking victims. The UK Human Trafficking Centre plans to carry out a full programme of research, across the spectrum of prevention, provision of services and prosecution and law enforcement. For example, it is currently trying to determine how many people are trafficked into the UK for forced labour.

Eaves Housing for Women has a research unit, the Lilith Project, which has carried out research on a number of related issues, including how young women are groomed into prostitution. It would like to undertake some research into the cost-effectiveness of abolishing prostitution and investing in exit strategies. Research leads to evidence, which may lead to more funding.

Message for donors: prevention

If donors want to prevent human trafficking into sexual exploitation, NPC recommends they invest in charities that are tackling the demand for prostitution (see ‘Violence against women in prostitution’). Experts believe that awareness-raising activities in source countries only tackle the symptoms, and poverty reduction programmes are large and expensive. Not enough is known about the impact of such interventions on the flow of trafficked humans. Donors should also consider funding research into effective supply side prevention strategies to gain a better understanding of how to prevent human trafficking at the source.

If donors want to prevent human trafficking into sexual exploitation, NPC recommends they invest in charities that are tackling the demand for prostitution.

Women who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation experience abuse that is comparable with torture. The impact on their physical and emotional health is devastating,
and often exacerbated by other factors that affect non-UK nationals such as an irregular immigration status, language difficulties, cultural differences and loneliness. These women, who are often deeply disturbed by their experience, need protection and multiple support services (see Figure 25). Safe accommodation is critical, but so too are psychological support, friendship, legal assistance, and help in returning to their home country, or integrating into UK society. Donors could transform the lives of victims by supporting charities that keep women safe and set them on the road to recovery.

Secure accommodation and support services in the UK

Safe housing

Refuges are unlikely to accommodate trafficked women

Women’s refuges are unlikely to provide accommodation to trafficked women. This is because the majority of victims come from countries outside the EU, or from the A8 countries, and so they do not have recourse to public funds.* In practical terms this means they cannot claim housing benefit for the cost of the bed space. If the charity did provide shelter to victims, it would have to fund the bed spaces itself, which would be incredibly expensive. For example, it costs around £40,000 a year to provide complex support to one woman in POPPY (which includes housing costs and the costs of providing additional support services). Some charities that NPC has visited have provided beds to women with no recourse to public funds, but have run up huge deficits as a result. Those women who apply for asylum are accommodated under the National Asylum Support Service, so they are more likely to be supported by women’s refuges.

Specialist housing for trafficked women

At the moment there are only a handful of organisations in the UK that provide accommodation to trafficked women. The POPPY Project in London provides 35 bed spaces to women who have been trafficked into prostitution, and the bed spaces are funded by the Home Office. This is the biggest housing provider for victims of trafficking (see Box 31).

The Home Office, as a major funder, has imposed strict criteria about who it can accept. At the moment it is unable to work with women who are trafficked into domestic servitude, women trafficked internally, women with children, and women who are unwilling to cooperate with police. Since many victims are from countries where corrupt authorities are complicit in trafficking, some women may be fearful of talking to British police. Of the women who have been turned away from the POPPY Project due to its restricted criteria, or capacity issues, POPPY says: ‘We can only make an informed guess at their fates, but further exploitation, abuse and re-trafficking is a likely outcome.’ The POPPY Project is currently fundraising for facilities for women who do not meet the Home Office criteria, such as women who have been trafficked into domestic servitude rather than sexual exploitation.

* A8 nationals (citizens from countries that joined the EU in 2004) can only access benefits when they have worked in the UK continuously for 12 months.
The TARA Project in Glasgow also provides a small number of bed spaces to victims of trafficking, but uses existing services to do so.

Other charities known to NPC that accommodate trafficked women include the Medaille Trust and the Salvation Army’s Jarrett Project. These organisations are part of the CHASTE consortium of faith-based organisations. CHASTE does not provide accommodation itself but it refers women into the safe houses mentioned above. Before providing accommodation for trafficked women, these organisations were generalist housing providers. Many of the experts that NPC consulted felt it was important for trafficked women to be given support from specialist, women-only organisations, that have a track record in working with victims of extreme sexual violence and therefore have a deep understanding of what women need. For instance, the POPPY Project sits within Eaves Housing for Women, which has provided accommodation to victims of domestic violence for over 30 years.

Psychological and practical support

Victims need more than just safe accommodation (see Figure 25). Most women are deeply traumatised by their experience, so they need intensive, psychological support. Some will not want to return to their country of origin, so they will need support to claim asylum. Others may want to take their trafficker to court, and need people to advocate on their behalf and support them through the process.

As well as providing safe accommodation, the POPPY Project provides a number of additional emergency and longer-term support services to women who have been trafficked into sexual exploitation (see Box 31). NPC likes the one-stop shop model, because it ensures coordination between services as well as continuity in provision for women.

The POPPY Project does not track long-term changes in the mental health, social skills or education of the women it helps. Victims may be so traumatised by their ordeal, frightened of being recaptured and overwhelmed by life in the UK, that their successes are generally measured in quite small steps, such as attending courses, engaging with mental health services, and not becoming involved in prostitution. Having said that, some of the women that POPPY previously helped have gone on to work and even to university. Despite the lack of evidence for long-term results, it is logical to assume that women who are no longer forced to have sex, are free from violence and getting care for their medical needs, must be safer and better off both physically and mentally.

Box 31: The POPPY Project

The POPPY Project provides safe housing and support to women who have been trafficked into prostitution in the UK. It is part of Eaves Housing for Women in London. Over the past four years, POPPY has received 722 referrals, and provided accommodation and/or outreach to 253 of these women.

POPPY is the main provider of refuge accommodation for trafficked women. It is heavily funded by the Home Office, which has imposed strict criteria regarding which women POPPY can accept.

- For the initial referral to POPPY, women have to be over 18 years old, have been trafficked into the UK, forcibly exploited in prostitution, and been working in prostitution in the last three months.
- To continue on the service after one month, POPPY has to accept that the women have a credible claim, and the women have to be willing to cooperate with the police.

POPPY has 35 crisis bed spaces. Unlike trafficking victims supported by other charities, clients at the POPPY Project are given a reflection period of one month, and those who cooperate with the police can stay for up to a year.

POPPY offers intensive support through its crisis services, because many of these women have never been alone in London before, and many of them do not speak English. As well as providing the women with safe housing, POPPY pays the women a weekly subsistence allowance, helps them to find clothes (many of them have suddenly left brothels, leaving behind all their possessions), helps them register with a GP and get counselling, helps them to contact family and friends, supports them to settle into the UK or re-settle back in their home country, and offers them English lessons. POPPY also supports women who decide to speak to the police about their story, and assists women with their asylum claims.

After leaving POPPY crisis support, women are given access to a second stage resettlement service for up to a year, to help them settle into the UK and live independently. Some women return to their country of origin and POPPY refers these women to agencies there that can help them reintegrate.

POPPY provides outreach support to women who do not live in POPPY accommodation. Outreach is available to women who do not meet the Home Office criteria; who meet the criteria but cannot stay with POPPY due to a lack of bed spaces; and for women who are in prison or in detention. Outreach includes a plan to stay safe from traffickers, immigration advice, healthcare and counselling, reintegrating or resettling information, and referrals to other agencies.

The UK-wide charity the Helen Bamber Foundation provides psychological support to victims of trafficking and other forms of torture. It uses a clinical team of volunteers, including psychotherapists, psychologists, movement therapists, complementary therapists and psychiatrists. The team are unable to prescribe medication themselves, but they give the women time to talk, and liaise with mainstream health services to help the women articulate how they are feeling, and help the healthcare specialists understand and respond to trafficked women’s needs. The results of its work are measured predominantly through client feedback, qualitative improvements.
Victims of trafficking need assistance getting home, and support upon arrival, to prevent them from being re-trafficked by traffickers anxious to recoup their ‘investment’.

Repatriation and resettlement services

Many women trafficked into the UK wish to return home to their friends and family. These women need assistance getting home, and support upon arrival, to prevent them from being re-trafficked by traffickers anxious to recoup their ‘investment’. NPC has not carried out comprehensive research on repatriation and resettlement services in source countries because we spent only one week in one source country, Lithuania. The quality and effectiveness of services will vary from country to country. The following country case study may be useful for donors to help them understand why repatriation and resettlement services are so important in order to reduce the likelihood of women being re-trafficked.

Case study: Lithuania

The Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants, which is run in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration, provides women with advice, information, travel documents, aeroplane tickets, reception on arrival in the country of return and onward transportation to their home. Those that are considered vulnerable are given £1,000 worth of ‘reintegration assistance’, which can be used for education, vocational training, medical services or accommodation etc.

This is not always enough. NPC has heard reports of traffickers waiting to meet women at their airport in Vilnius, posing as their husbands or boyfriends. The women, who are too terrified to alert the IOM, are at high risk of being re-trafficked. Lithuanian charities such as Caritas Lithuania and the Missing Persons Family Support Centre meet the women at the airport, ask the ‘partners’ for ID, and then escort the women home. If they really do not want to go with the Caritas social worker they will be informed about their options, and can contact them if they are being harassed by a trafficker or need some other sort of help in the future.

Charities also run safe houses for women returning to their home country. Some have previously worked in brothels, and others are being chased by traffickers who have debts with pimps. Witness protection does not always work, and domestic violence shelters are well-known because many towns are so small. Lithuanian Caritas run three apartments, the location of which is changed twice a year. They have 15 bed spaces in the apartments, and five bed spaces in Catholic convents, for the most psychologically damaged women.

Charities such as Klaipeda Social and Psychological Support Centre and Lithuanian Caritas work intensively with women when they return home. In the case of the latter, workers visit the women as much as once a day for six months, provide them with psychological support, support through the courts, and help finding jobs. Getting work is essential, because without any income the woman will become vulnerable again, and will be at risk of being trafficked. According to the POPPY Project, around 20% of the trafficked women they support are re-trafficked on return to their country of origin. In addition, UNICEF estimated that up to 50% of Moldovan trafficked women who are sent back to their country in 2002 were re-trafficked soon after their arrival. Without any hope of a job or any way to support themselves and their families, some women believe that the next time they try to move abroad it will be better, and others feel they do not have any options but to move abroad again. Charities provide education, training and life opportunities for repatriated victims to help them move on with their lives and prevent them from being re-trafficked.

Lobbying and campaigning

Stop the Traffik is a global coalition of 1,000 organisations in 50 different countries that is campaigning to end human trafficking. Membership is open to all organisations, including schools, charities, faith groups and businesses. Its main objectives are to educate the public, inspire individuals to be advocates of change and influence people in power, and to fundraise for local charities that are working across the globe to tackle trafficking. Its website www.stopthetraffik.org/projects lists the local charities around the world that it supports.

The international charity Anti-Slavery International runs campaigns and lobbies the government to end human trafficking and other forms of modern day slavery. This includes calling on governments across the world to sign up to legislation that will provide guaranteed minimum standards of protection and support for trafficked people. Anti-Slavery International’s UK campaign is focused on the issue of trafficking for forced labour.

In our experience, although funding in this area carries a risk in that results can never be guaranteed, well-designed campaigns can have very high expected returns and far reaching impacts in terms of tackling the causes of a problem. Inspirational examples from the past prove the point, whether the campaign was to do with women’s suffrage or civil rights in America. One particularly successful recent
example is the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign, which is currently calling on the government to give new resources, new rights and a new priority to disabled children and their families.

**Message for donors: provision of support**

NPC recommends donors fund charities that provide specialist accommodation and support to victims of human trafficking in the UK. These organisations should be women’s refuges that have a track record in supporting victims of rape and sexual assault, and should be able to provide each woman with the practical, psychological and legal support that she needs. Funding is needed to provide support for women who fall outside the government’s strict current criteria for support (eg, women who do not wish to cooperate with the police).

When the government ratifies the European Convention on Trafficking of Human Beings at the end of 2008, the UK will be required to provide protection for all victims of human trafficking, including safe accommodation, medical assistance, a 30-day recovery and reflection period, renewable residence permits and safe repatriation. Fewer women will fall outside the government’s criteria for support, which is likely to alleviate some of the need for private funding. However, as we discussed in other chapters of this report, the government has not always had a track record of providing for victims of other forms of violence. After all, UK victims of domestic violence and rape rarely get given the psychological support they ask for. Even after ratification, NPC is uncertain whether trafficking victims will receive the long-term specialist support that they need in order to stay safe and overcome the trauma they have experienced. Donor support is likely to continue to be needed.

**Training and awareness-raising among professionals and agencies**

Despite the UK Human Trafficking Centre’s recent efforts to train the police and immigration staff, there is still a lack of awareness about the issue in some areas of the country. It is not unheard of for trafficked women freed in police raids to be sent back to their home countries rather than referred to support services. It is also not unusual for the police to treat cases as rape or immigration cases, rather than more complicated trafficking cases. If more women are identified and given the support they need, then the pool of potential witnesses increases. Trafficked women need to be able to provide evidence in the courts if pimps and traffickers are to be convicted.

The POPPY Project provides training around the UK to every single asylum case worker (50 have been trained so far, and 300 will be trained nationally in total), social services and the police, so that these agencies know about the issues around trafficking, how to identify and work with these women, and the women’s rights. The charity ECPAT UK is a child rights organisation and campaigns to end child prostitution, child pornography and child trafficking. It has produced an online education programme for professionals, to raise awareness about the issue of child trafficking, and how to respond.11

The Blueblindfold campaign, which was launched at the end of 2007, is still embryonic and in the process of registering as a charity.

**Legal support for women**

A serious problem for some trafficking victims is taking their trafficker to court in their country of origin. In Lithuania, traffickers can afford to pay for top lawyers, up to 30 times what the state pays for the victim’s lawyers, so they get far better representation and are more likely to win the case.175 Women from other countries may be reluctant to make a charge against their trafficker because witness protection...
is extremely poor, and local police may be complicit with traffickers. Some charities in Lithuania that NPC visited were asking for funding to pay for top quality lawyers to increase the chance of a successful conviction.

Some victims of trafficking are prosecuted for entering into the UK with false documents. This is unjust and unfair. Charities like the **POPPY Project** have worked in conjunction with **Amnesty UK** and **Anti-Slavery International** to persuade the Crown Prosecution Service to drop such cases. This year, four cases were resolved successfully, and two cases are ongoing.

**Message for donors: prosecution and justice**

There are fewer opportunities for donors in this area because the state carries out the bulk of this work. However, donors might like to consider funding charities that provide training to professionals to help them identify more trafficked women, and to help them to respond in the appropriate way.

**Summary for donors**

There have been huge improvements in the provision for trafficked women in recent years and there is considerable momentum for change. The key funding priority is shown in Figure 26 below.

**Specialist housing and support**

Women who have escaped trafficking need more than just a safe place to live. Most are so traumatised by their ordeal that they need intensive psychological support. Some may need help to settle back into life in their home country; others will not want to return to their country of origin, so will need help to claim asylum. Those that choose to take their trafficker to court need support through the process.

Charities that provide care for trafficked women need to have a track record in providing specialist services to victims of rape (for example, they should be women’s refuges, not generalist housing providers), and also need to provide counselling, interpreting and legal services. The **POPPY Project** (part of **Eaves Housing for Women**) provides such support.

Helping trafficked women reintegrate into society takes a long time, and many women fail to make the transition successfully. Some may be re-trafficked. Charities that provide specialist support to trafficked women are not always successful in the long term, but they do have an enormous impact on victims’ lives.

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**Figure 26: Funding priorities for tackling trafficking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Provision of services</th>
<th>Prosecution and justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>specialist housing and support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Violence against women is widespread, and many victims are subjected to sustained and repeated abuse. It is often difficult for women to escape abuse, since most know their abuser, are held against their will, or are trapped by drug addiction or poverty. Abuse is still tolerated by society, under a thin veneer of disapproval. Despite significant government progress, little is being done to prevent violence against women, services for victims are thin on the ground, and too many perpetrators escape conviction.

Charities have been the main source of specialist help for these victims for years. They have campaigned for better services and legal protection for victims. They have developed new ways of tackling violence against women, and they have helped those women that the government has failed to support.

Donors can help to change the lives of women like Joanna and Manjit, whose stories were told at the start of this report. Funding charities in this field will help these women escape further violence, recover from the trauma of abuse and rebuild their lives.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Prevalence of violence against women

Data from the British Crime Survey 2005/2006 tells us the prevalence of the following types of violence against women among adults aged 16 to 59:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of abuse</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family abuse—non-sexual</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are interested in non-sexual partner abuse, non-sexual family abuse and sexual assault. However, we cannot simply add these numbers together as many women will have experienced more than one type of abuse. The same source also gives us the extent of these overlaps:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of abuse</th>
<th>Prevalence amongst women who have experienced any kind of intimate violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family abuse—non-sexual</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + Family abuse—non-sexual</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + sexual assault</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + stalking</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family abuse—non-sexual + sexual assault</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family abuse—non-sexual + stalking</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault + stalking</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + Family abuse—non-sexual + sexual assault</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + Family abuse—non-sexual + stalking</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner abuse—non-sexual + sexual assault + stalking</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family abuse—non-sexual + sexual assault + stalking</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All types</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, let us say that the overall prevalence of all violence against women is $VT$, the prevalence of non-sexual partner violence is $PV$, the prevalence of non-sexual family abuse is $FV$, the prevalence of sexual assault is $SA$ and the prevalence of stalking is $ST$. Then:

\[
VT = PV + FV + SA + ST - VT \times (5\% + 7\% + 9\% + 2\% + 1\% + 6\%) \text{ [single overlaps]} - 2 \times VT (3\% + 3\% + 8\% + 1\%) \text{ [double overlaps]} - 3 \times VT 4\% \text{ [triple overlaps]}
\]

Substituting known values for PV, FV, SA and ST gives

\[
VT = 86.5\% - VT \times 30\% - VT \times 30\% - VT \times 12\% - 172\% \times VT = 86.5\%
\]

\[
VT = 50.3\%
\]
So, the prevalence of all violence against women, including stalking, is 48.6%. The definition of violence against women used in this report does not include stalking, so we must reduce the prevalence by the 11% of women who experienced only stalking.

Prevalence of violence against women, not including stalking
= 50.3% × 99% = 44.8%

**Appendix 2: Cost of violence against women**

Below is a summary of the amounts and sources for our estimates of different kinds of domestic violence.

**Domestic violence**

These costs are per year and only apply to England and Wales. They therefore set a minimum amount for the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£13,877,265,280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost economic output</td>
<td>£2,119,115,160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil legal costs</td>
<td>£229,978,471</td>
<td>Scaled down to get a ‘women only’ figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs</td>
<td>£157,860,000</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services and children</td>
<td>£228,000,000</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£176,000,000</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£320,168,340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>£884,384,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>£18,592,771,252</td>
<td>In 2003/2004 prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sexual violence**

These costs only apply to England and Wales and are therefore a minimum amount for the UK.

**Rape as part of domestic violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£104,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost economic output</td>
<td>£15,150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil legal costs</td>
<td>£174</td>
<td>Scaled down to get a ‘women only’ figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs</td>
<td>£120</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services and children</td>
<td>£173</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£332</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£2,082</td>
<td>The analysis of physical health costs of rape is much more detailed here than the Walby report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>£475</td>
<td>Calculated a unit cost for sexual offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total unit cost</strong></td>
<td>£122,806</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of domestic violence rapes per year</strong></td>
<td>37,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>£4,543,806,154</td>
<td>In 2003/2004 prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rape outside of domestic violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£104,30017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost economic output</td>
<td>£15,15017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£33217</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women and divided by all domestic violence victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£2,082185</td>
<td>The analysis of physical health costs of rape is much more detailed here than the Walby report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>£47517</td>
<td>Calculated a unit cost for sexual offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unit cost</td>
<td>£122,339</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of domestic violence</td>
<td>63,00017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£7,707,361,000</td>
<td>In 2003/2004 prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other sexual violence as part of domestic violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£12,872185</td>
<td>The analysis of human and emotional costs of sexual violence that is not rape is much more detailed in this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost economic output</td>
<td>£3,362185</td>
<td>The lost economic output of sexual violence that is not rape is much more detailed in this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil legal costs</td>
<td>£17417</td>
<td>Scaled down to get a ‘women only’ figure and divided by all domestic violence victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs</td>
<td>£12017</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women and divided by all domestic violence victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services and children</td>
<td>£17317</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women and divided by all domestic violence victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£33217</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women and divided by all DV victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£748185</td>
<td>The analysis of physical health costs of rape is much more detailed here than the Walby report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>£47517</td>
<td>Calculated a unit cost for sexual offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unit cost</td>
<td>£18,256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sexual assaults as part of DV per year</td>
<td>26,00017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£474,644,865</td>
<td>In 2003/2004 prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other sexual violence not part of domestic violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£12,872</td>
<td>The analysis of human and emotional costs of sexual violence that is not rape is much more detailed in this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost economic output</td>
<td>£3,362</td>
<td>The lost economic output of sexual violence that is not rape is much more detailed in this report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£332</td>
<td>Assumed all costs were to women and divided by all domestic violence victims to get a unit cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£748</td>
<td>The analysis of physical health costs of rape is much more detailed here than in the Walby report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal justice</td>
<td>£475</td>
<td>Calculated a unit cost for sexual offences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unit cost</td>
<td>£17,789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sexual assaults as</td>
<td>£24,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part of domestic violence per year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** £11,100,375,619 in 2003/2004 prices

Total cost of sexual violence is £23.8bn each year, of which £18.8bn is in addition to the cost of domestic violence. These figures are in 2003/2004 prices; applying the HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier of 1.079, this brings the cost, in 2006/2007 terms, to £25,708,456,462.

(For sexual violence not part of domestic violence, the cost in 2003/2004 terms is £18,807,736,619, or in 2006/2007 terms £20,935,487,100.)

**Violence against black and minority ethnic women**

These costs only apply to England and Wales and are therefore a minimum amount for the UK.

Black and minority ethnic groups make up about 7.9% of the UK population. To estimate the total cost of violence toward black and minority ethnic women, we simply took 7.9% of the costs of domestic violence.

The total cost of violence against black and minority ethnic women is therefore £1,468,828,929 each year in 2003/2004 prices. Applying the HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier of 1.079, this brings the cost to £1,584,866,414 in 2006/2007 costs.

This estimate does not include:

- additional costs of working with women for whom English is not their first language;
- the costs associated with female genital mutilation; and,
- the cost of forced marriage.

It also does not account for the fact that some of these women are without recourse to public funds.

**Violence towards women in prostitution**

These are estimated costs for the UK.

It is estimated that there are 80,000 prostitutes currently working in the UK. It is estimated that there are 4,000 women in the UK who have been trafficked into prostitution. This is an estimate of the costs of the approximately 76,000 women who have not been trafficked. One study found that in the previous six months, 37% of prostitutes interviewed had experienced some form of client attack. Of those street prostitutes who had been attacked, 47% had been ‘slapped, kicked or punched’, 37% reported client robbery and 28% reported attempted rape.
Other physical violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£7,640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£801</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unit cost</td>
<td>£8,441</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of victims</td>
<td>13,216</td>
<td>37% x 47% x 76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£111,559,632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robbery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£2,271</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of victims</td>
<td>10,404</td>
<td>37% x 37% x 76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£23,628,392</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attempted rape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cost</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human and emotional</td>
<td>£104,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>£2,082</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>£332</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total unit cost</td>
<td>£106,714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of victims</td>
<td>7,874</td>
<td>37% x 47% x 76,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£823,830,515</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, the estimate of costs for non-trafficked women comes to £959,018,540 in 2003/04 prices. Applying the HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier of 1.079 this is £1,034,781,004 each year in 2006/2007 prices. This figure is very tentative. Here is a (not exhaustive) list for why these numbers should be treated with extreme caution:

- the prevalence of crimes is based on a small sample of on-street prostitutes. They probably do not hold for off-street prostitutes;
- the number of 80,000 prostitutes is incredibly rough;
- these costs do not include:
  - criminal justice costs;
  - the contribution of prostitution to the cost of drugs and organised crime; and
- the long-term mental and physical effects of life as a prostitute.

Human trafficking

The Home Office has estimated that the economic and human cost of trafficking in 2003 was £1bn for the UK. This research is not in the public domain so it is impossible to break these costs down further. Applying the HM Treasury GDP deflator multiplier of 1.079 this cost is £1.08bn in 2006/2007 prices.

Assuming that the majority of trafficking is into the sex industry, this brings the total cost of prostitution to £1.96bn in 2003/2004 prices. This equates to £2.11bn at 2006/2007 prices.
Total cost of violence against women

To get the total cost of violence against women each year in England and Wales we add together:

- The cost of domestic violence (£20.1bn); and
- The cost of sexual violence, not including domestic violence (£21bn);

The cost of violence towards black and minority ethnic women overlaps entirely with domestic violence costs and we do not know the extent to which prostitution and trafficking costs overlap with other costs.

This gives us a total cost of violence against women in England and Wales each year of £40.1bn.

This is an indicative figure and can be used as a minimum for the cost of violence against women in the UK.

Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;E</td>
<td>Accident and Emergency unit at hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASBOs</td>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour Orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>Black and minority ethnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAADA</td>
<td>Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHASTE</td>
<td>Churches Against Sex Trafficking in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Crown Prosecution Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVIP</td>
<td>Domestic Violence Intervention Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMU</td>
<td>Forced Marriage Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>General Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTPs</td>
<td>Harmful traditional practices: honour killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDVA</td>
<td>Independent Domestic Violence Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISVA</td>
<td>Independent Sexual Violence Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARAC</td>
<td>Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (domestic violence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>New Philanthropy Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSHE</td>
<td>Personal and Social Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARC</td>
<td>Sexual Assault Referral Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Southall Black Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDVC</td>
<td>Specialist Domestic Violence Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VWAPP</td>
<td>The Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAFE</td>
<td>Women’s Aid Federation of England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are very grateful to the following individuals—and their organisations—for their input into this report:

Aanchal
ADVANCE
Amnesty UK
Anti-Slavery International
Ashiana
Asylum Aid
Barnardo’s
CAADA
Capital International
Cardiff Women’s Safety Unit
Caritas Lithuania
CHASTE
Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International
Comic Relief
Department for Communities and Local Government
Domestic Violence Intervention Project
Eaves Housing for Women (and the POPPY Project)
ECPAT UK
End Violence Against Women
English Collective of Prostitutes
European Women’s Lobby
EVA
Family Welfare Association
The Forced Marriage Unit
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lithuania)
FORWARD
Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre
Glasgow Women’s Support Project
Greater London Domestic Violence Project
HALT
The Haven, Paddington
The Helen Bamber Foundation
The Henry Smith Charity
The Home Office
Imkaan
International Organisation for Migration, Lithuania
Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation

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Poonam Joshi
Aidan McQuade
Shaminda Ubhi
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Wendy Shepherd
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Anne Wade
Jan Pickles
Kristina Miliniene
Carrie Pemberton
Liz Kelly
Gunilla Ekberg
Gilly Green
Helen Courtis
Ben Jemal
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Carrie Mitchell
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Naomi Abigail
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Gita Patel
Rita Augutiene
Diana Nammi
Kalayaan
Karma Nirvana
Klaipeda Social and Psychological Support Centre
The London Centre for Personal Safety
The Metropolitan Police, Sapphire Unit
The Metropolitan Police, SCD5 Intel Unit 7
The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Lithuanian Government
Missing Persons Family Support Centre
The National Christian Alliance on Prostitution
NCH
New Philanthropy Capital
The Nia Project
North Tees Women’s Aid
The Northern Rock Foundation
One25
Panah
Perth Rape Crisis Centre
Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre
Rape Crisis Scotland
Refuge

RESPECT
The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts
The Scottish Government
Scottish Women’s Aid
South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre
Southall Black Sisters
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
The Survivors Trust
Toynbee Hall
Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre
UK Human Trafficking Centre
University of Bristol
University of Durham
U-turn
Vaiko Namas
Womankind Worldwide
Women’s Aid Federation of England

Women’s Issues Information Centre
Women’s Resource Centre
Women’s Rape and Sexual Violence Service
Worth Project

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Ona Gustiene
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Denise Marshall  Eaves Housing for Women
Hannana Siddiqui  Southall Black Sisters
Anne Wade  Capital International
Nicole Westmarland  University of Durham

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Useful links

Aanchal    www.aanchalweb.co.uk
ADVANCE    www.advanceadvocacyproject.org.uk
Agency for Cultural and Change Management www.accmsheffield.org
Amnesty International UK    www.amnesty.org.uk
Anti-Slavery International    www.antislavery.org
Ashiana    www.ashiana.org.uk
Barnardo's    www.barnardos.org.uk
Beatbullying    www.beatbullying.org
Blueblindfold Campaign    www.blueblindfold.co.uk
Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse www.caada.org.uk
CHASTE    www.chaste.org.uk
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International www.catwinternational.org
Domestic Violence Intervention Project www.dvip.org
Eaves Housing for Women    www.eaves4women.co.uk
ECPAT UK    www.ecpat.org.uk
End Violence Against Women Campaign www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
EVA    www.eva.org.uk
Family Welfare Association    www.fwa.org.uk
FORWARD    www.forwarduk.org.uk
Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre www.rapecrisiscentre-glascow.co.uk
Glasgow Women’s Support Project www.womenssupportproject.co.uk
Greater London Domestic Violence Project www.gldvp.org.uk
HALT    www.halt.org.uk
Helen Bamber Foundation www.helenbamber.org
Hull Community Church www.community-house.co.uk/church
Iranian and Kurdish Women’s Rights Organisation www.ikwro.org.uk
Imkaan    www.imkaan.org.uk
Kalayaan    www.kalayaan.org.uk
Karma Nirvana www.karmanirvana.org.uk
Let Go    www.impacthousing.org.uk/LetGo
London Centre for Personal Safety www.londoncentreforpersonalsafety.org
Lucy Faithfull Foundation www.lucyfaithfull.org
Mash    www.mash.org.uk
Medaille Trust    www.medsille.co.uk
National Christian Alliance on Prostitution    www.ncapuk.org
Newham Asian Women's Project    www.nawp.org
The Nia Project    www.niaproject.info
North Tees Women's Aid    www.ntwa.info
NSPCC    www.nspcc.org.uk
POPPY Project    www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY_Project/POPPY_Project.php
Praed Street Project    www.praedstreetproject.org.uk
Rape Crisis    www.rapecrisis.org.uk
Rape Crisis Scotland    www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk
Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre    www.rasasc.org.uk
Refuge    www.refuge.org.uk
Relate    www.relate.org.uk
RESPECT    www.respect.uk.net
Southall Black Sisters    www.southallblacksisters.org.uk
South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre    www.sericc.org.uk
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence    www.standingtogether.org.uk
Streetreach    www.streetreach.org.uk
Stop the Traffik    www.stopthetraffik.org
Survivors Trust    www.thesurvivorstrust.org
Suzy Lamplugh Trust    www.suzylamplugh.org
The Truth Isn't Sexy    www.thetruthisntsexy.com
Tostan    www.tostan.org
Toynbee Hall’s Safe Exit Project    www.toynbeehall.org.uk
Tyneside Cyrenians    www.tynesidecyrenians.co.uk
Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre    www.tynesidercc.org.uk
UNICEF    www.unicef.org.uk
U-Turn    www.uturnproject.co.uk
Walsall Street Teams    www.walsallstreetteams.co.uk
Wave Trust    www.wavetrust.org
Womankind Worldwide    www.womankind.org.uk
Women’s Aid Federation of England    www.womensaid.org.uk
Women’s Resource Centre    www.wrc.org.uk
York Women's Aid    www.yorkwomensaid.org
Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust    www.zerotolerance.org.uk
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- Which organisation could make the best use of my money?
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